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**THESIS**

**UNDERSTANDING THE MILITARY'S ROLE IN ENDING  
STATE-SPONSORED TERRORISM**

by

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September 2004

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<p>Countries sponsoring and supporting terrorism impede the efforts of the United States and the international community to fight terrorism. Until states that support terrorism cease such sponsorship, they remain a critical foundation for terrorist groups and their operations. The purpose of this thesis is to examine the U.S. military's role in coercing states to cease their sponsorship of terrorism. Using game theory, this thesis analyzes the utility of military force against state-sponsored terrorism. It explains why past military responses did not pose a credible threat and were thus, an ineffective instrument of national power. It then examines how military force is employed in the current war on terrorism. The findings of this thesis suggest that the limited military strikes employed against states for their role in terrorist attacks prior to September 11, 2001, preconditioned the leaders of supportive states to believe U.S. leadership lacked commitment in its strategy to end state-sponsored terrorism. The findings also suggest the dramatic change in the United States' method of employing its military forces against state sponsors of terrorism after September 11, 2001, created the credible, coercive military threat required to accomplish the U.S. national objective of ending state-sponsored terrorism.</p>			
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**UNDERSTANDING THE MILITARY'S ROLE IN ENDING  
STATE-SPONSORED TERRORISM**

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## ABSTRACT

Countries sponsoring and supporting terrorism impede the efforts of the United States and the international community to fight terrorism. Until states that support terrorism cease such sponsorship, they remain a critical foundation for terrorist groups and their operations. The purpose of this thesis is to examine the U.S. military's role in coercing states to cease their sponsorship of terrorism. Using game theory, this thesis analyzes the utility of military force against state-sponsored terrorism. It explains why past military responses did not pose a credible threat and were thus, an ineffective instrument of national power. It then examines how military force is employed in the current war on terrorism. The findings of this thesis suggest that the limited military strikes employed against states for their role in terrorist attacks prior to September 11, 2001, preconditioned the leaders of supportive states to believe U.S. leadership lacked commitment in its strategy to end state-sponsored terrorism. The findings also suggest the dramatic change in the United States' method of employing its military forces against state sponsors of terrorism after September 11, 2001, created the credible, coercive military threat required to accomplish the U.S. national objective of ending state-sponsored terrorism.

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

### **A. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the U.S. military's role in coercing states to cease their sponsorship of terrorism. Using game theory, this thesis analyzes the utility of military force against state-sponsored terrorism. The analysis is based upon Alexander George's premise that coercive diplomacy relies on the threat of force to achieve the objective, and that if force must be used to strengthen diplomatic efforts at persuasion, it must be employed in "an exemplary manner," in a form of limited military action, to demonstrate resolution and willingness to escalate to higher levels of military action if necessary (George 1, 1994, p. 2). This thesis argues that prior to September 11, 2001, the United States' limited use of military force against state sponsors of terrorism, and the unwillingness of U.S. policymakers to escalate to higher levels of military action, failed to coerce states to end their support of terrorism. Furthermore, this thesis argues that the limited military actions the U.S. employed against these states failed to produce the credible threat necessary to persuade other state sponsors to change their courses of action, and was, therefore, an ineffective instrument of national power. This thesis accepts that diplomatic, economic, and legal efforts, unaided by the threat of military action, persuade some state sponsors to change their courses of action, but do so in a time frame unacceptable due to the grave threat terrorism poses to U.S. national security today. This thesis then argues that the United States' willingness to escalate to higher levels of military action against state sponsors of terrorism since September 11, 2001, makes military force an effective instrument of national power, capable of coercing states to cease their sponsorship of terrorist activities and organizations.

### **B. BACKGROUND**

For more than a generation international terrorism has been regarded as a threat to U.S. national security. Some states find terrorism a cheap and deadly weapon capable of making America and its allies suffer. Other states use it to try to force changes in policy and to weaken the resolve of the United States on larger issues (Operations Directorate, 2001). The Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism at the U.S. State Department observes that "as the power of the United States increased, the frustration of marginal

regimes with agendas inimical to those of the United States led to an increased use of terrorism to try to influence U.S. policy, gain concessions, and exact revenge" (as cited in Operations Directorate, 2001).

In the 1970s and 1980s terrorists frequently attacked American targets, often as an outgrowth of international conflicts. The groups involved were linked to states. After the destruction of Pan American flight 103 by Libyan agents in 1988, the wave of international terrorism that targeted Americans seemed to subside. In 1995, a National Intelligence Estimate concluded that the most likely threat would come from emerging, "transient" terrorist groups which are more fluid and multinational than the older organizations and state-sponsored surrogates. Lacking strong organization, this "new terrorist phenomenon" could still obtain weapons, money, and support from an assortment of governments, factions, and individual benefactors. Growing international support networks enhance their ability to operate throughout the world (Diplomacy, N.D., pp. 1-2).

The terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 (9-11) in Washington D.C., New York City, and Pennsylvania are considered acts of war against the United States of America. These attacks reinforced the need to use every instrument of U.S. national power—diplomatic, economic, law enforcement, financial, information, intelligence, and military—to fight terrorist networks and those who support their efforts. Military force, in particular, has been called upon more frequently since the 9-11 attacks than in the previous two decades.

## **1. State Sponsorship**

A terrorist organization's structure, membership, resources, and security determine its capabilities and reach. Furthermore, a terrorist organization that has a secure physical base from which to operate is better able to expand its reach. A terrorist organization which is allowed to operate freely within a state's borders is able to devote its resources to screening and training rather than expending those resources on the security of the organization. For example, al Qaeda camps in Afghanistan were able to devote their resources to the screening of recruits in order to effectively select members and assign these members a role within the organization. Without these camps this capability would have been diminished, though not totally eliminated.

Figure 1 depicts the numerous actors in the terrorist system. Removing any of these actors will impede the efforts of the terrorist organization. Although this thesis acknowledges that organizations, such as al Qaeda, are able to operate in the international environment without state support, their capability to operate is diminished by the removal of this support. The focus of this thesis, therefore, is on the elimination of supportive states.

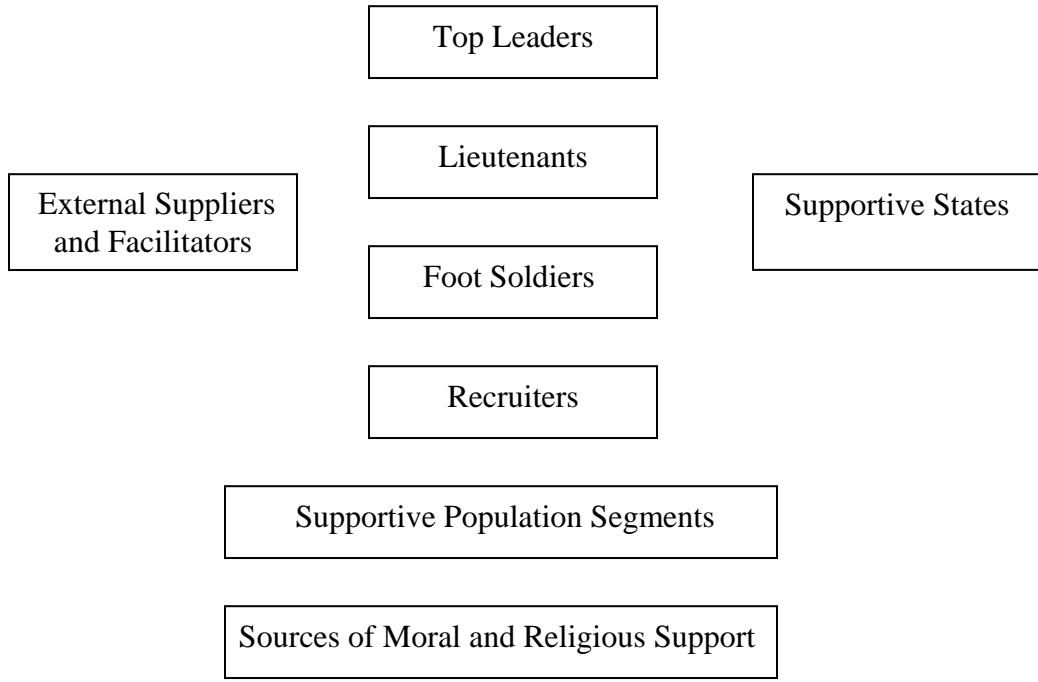


Figure 1. The Actors in a Terrorist System

(After Davis & Jenkins, 2002, p. 15)

State sponsors support a terrorist organization's expansion by providing necessities such as: 1) funds; 2) weapons; 3) training; 4) the protection of diplomatic passports for travel; 5) diplomatic pouches to transport weapons and explosives; 6) embassies as staging points for attacks and national territory as safehavens from prosecution and reprisal; 7) and intelligence from the supporting governments and those allied or friendly with it (Tucker, 1997, p. 17). Whether through ignorance, failing to acknowledge that a terrorist organization is actually operating within their borders; inability of states to effectively stop a terrorist organization from operating within their borders; or purposely intending to allow a terrorist organization to operate, states around

the world provide the essentials terrorists need to plan, organize, train, and conduct their operations. Once entrenched in a safe operating environment, the terrorist organization can begin to solidify and grow (National Strategy, 2003).

## **2. U.S. Counterterrorist (CT) Policy**

The U.S. government's first response to terrorism defined it as criminal and used international organizations to establish and enforce a regime of international agreements that outlawed certain acts of terror and promoted the cooperation necessary to capture and punish perpetrators. Apart from the emphasis on using international agreements to combat terrorism, the most important counterterrorism policy developed in the early 1970s was the U.S. government's insistence that it would make no concessions to terrorists (Tucker, 1997, pp 4-10).

Throughout the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, the U.S. relied on a variety of measures to combat terrorism ranging from international legal convictions and economic sanctions to military retaliation. In June 1995, President Clinton issued Presidential Decision Directive PDD-39, superseding a directive signed by President Reagan in 1986. President Clinton's directive stated the U.S. policy on counterterrorism, declaring that the United States saw "terrorism as a potential threat to national security as well as a criminal act and will apply all appropriate means to combat it" (as cited in Diplomacy, N.D., p. 2).

PDD-39 reinforced diplomacy as the primary means of dealing with the international terrorist threat to the United States stating, ". . . the U.S. shall pursue vigorously efforts to deter and preempt, apprehend and prosecute, or assist other governments to prosecute, individuals who perpetrate or plan to perpetrate such [terrorist] attacks" (as cited in Diplomacy, N.D., p. 2).

The 2002 Patterns of Global Terrorism lays out President Bush's perception of the war on terrorism. It lists the four "enduring" policy principles guiding U.S. counterterrorism strategy as: "first, make no concessions to terrorists and strike no deals; second, bring terrorists to justice for their crimes; third, isolate and apply pressure on states that sponsor terrorism to force them to change their behavior; and fourth, bolster the counterterrorism capabilities of those countries that work with the United States and require assistance" (2003, p. xi).

The United States is pursuing a strategy of direct and continuous action against terrorist groups. The intent of U.S. national strategy is to stop terrorist attacks against the United States, its citizens, its interests, and its friends and allies around the world, ultimately creating an international environment inhospitable to terrorists and those who support them. By striking constantly and ensuring terrorists have no place to hide; the U.S. hopes to compress the terrorists' scope, thereby reducing the capability of these organizations (National, 2003).

*a. The Role of the Military in Counterterrorism Strategy*

Beginning in the 1970s, the U.S. government asked the armed forces to develop a capability for combating terrorism. The initial focus was on the development of a hostage rescue capability. The failure of the 1980 Iran hostage rescue mission, however, demonstrated the need to build more robust forces. By the mid-1980s the U.S. government also began considering capabilities for offensive counterterrorism missions that would use military forces to attack terrorist organizations on their "home turf." However, as the international terrorism danger subsided at the end of the 1980s, little additional effort appeared necessary for an offensive counterterrorism capability. The Department of Defense (DoD) was a secondary player in counterterrorism efforts during George H.W. Bush's presidency and the early years of the Clinton administration when U.S. efforts focused on the apprehension and rendition of wanted suspects (The Military, N.D., p. 1).

In May 1998, President Clinton issued a counterterrorism policy, Presidential Directive 62, consisting of ten program areas. The only program area highlighting a DoD role was the tenth: protection of Americans overseas. The directive stated that the Defense Department, through the unified regional commanders, was responsible for the protection of U.S. forces stationed abroad. The Joint Chiefs of Staff also established a special office dedicated to what DoD officials describe as a decades-old, high-priority mission to protect U.S. troops from unconventional attack (The Military, N.D., p. 2).

At home, the military's role was limited to providing specialized support to state and local authorities when dealing with the consequences of terrorist attacks, as well as providing security for special events. Abroad, the role of the military was to

provide support for law enforcement, such as military transport for terrorist renditions, or support for other agencies as they responded to a terrorist attack. Then Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, Walter Slocombe, acknowledged that it would have been extraordinary to assign the military a leading role in counterterrorism efforts abroad since military force was not the primary counterterrorism instrument (The Military, N.D., p. 2). As a result, the U.S. State Department retained the lead in terrorism overseas with the military performing a very limited role.

***b. Offensive Counterterrorism Missions***

Due to the lack of emphasis on offensive military counterterrorism missions, the U.S. military played a limited role in counterterrorism policy during the 1980s and 1990s. The military was called upon only three times during those 20 years to conduct offensive military operations in an effort to strengthen diplomatic efforts at persuasion. These operations include: 1) an attack against Libya in 1986 for the La Belle disco bombing in West Berlin that killed three people, including two American GIs, and injured 200, including 70 Americans; 2) the retaliatory strike against Iraq in 1993 for its assassination attempt on former President George H.W. Bush; 3) and the strikes against Sudan and Afghanistan in 1998 following the U.S. Embassy bombings in Nairobi, Kenya and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

In each of the above instances, the military force used was limited in both breadth and scope. These operations relied on limited strikes by aircraft and cruise missiles. In each instance, the strike was designed to send a message that the U.S. would not tolerate terrorist attacks. Following the Libya strike on April 14, 1986, President Reagan acknowledged that he had “no illusions that [the] action will ring down the curtain on Qaddafi’s reign of terror,” but he hoped it would curb the Libyan ruler’s terrorist attacks and “bring close a safer and more secure world” (as cited in Zimmerman, 1994, p. 216). The option chosen against Iraq in 1993 was, as President Clinton explained, “firm and commensurate” (as cited in Crenshaw, 2003, p. 315). The purpose, once again, was to send a message to the people responsible for planning the operation. As President Clinton explained in his public address: “If Saddam and his regime contemplate further illegal provocative actions, they can be certain of our response” (as cited in Crenshaw, 2003, p. 316). Following the U.S. Embassy bombings in Nairobi and

Dar es Salaam, Secretary of State William Cohen stated that it was important to send a signal that the United States was not going to tolerate terrorist activity against America (The Military, N.D., p. 2).

Although U.S. leaders explained the purpose of each military operation was to send a firm message that the U.S. would not tolerate terrorist attacks, not once did the U.S. show its willingness or resolve to escalate to higher levels of military action. Therefore, although the U.S. was willing to use military force in an exemplary manner, its unwillingness to escalate to higher levels of military action when its objectives were not met created a situation in which U.S. military force not only failed to coerce the targeted states to cease their support for terrorism, but also failed to create the credible threat necessary for coercive diplomacy to be effective against other state sponsors of terrorism. As a result, terrorist attacks against the United States continued, the most recent and the most devastating by far, occurring on September 11, 2001.

### **C. RELEVANCE**

In the past, the United States' enemies needed great armies and great industrial capabilities to threaten America. Today that threat has changed. Small terrorist networks or cells of larger terrorist organizations, with the assistance of states willing to support and supply these organizations, threaten the security of the United States and its citizens.

The September 11, 2001 attacks confirm that some terrorist organizations will seek to produce mass casualties if they believe it serves their purpose. As Douglas Feith (2004), Under Secretary of Defense for Policy stated, “The terrorists who killed 3000 ordinary people at the World Trade Center, where ten times that number worked on a daily basis, would have been pleased to have killed them all—or many times more than that, if they had had the means to do so.”

Although terrorists will most likely continue to rely on traditional terrorist tactics, several groups and states increasingly look to chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear (CBRN) materials as a means to cause mass casualties rivaling or exceeding those of September 11 (Patterns of Global Terrorism, 2002, p. 78). As Feith states, “It’s a significant coincidence that the list of key state sponsors of terrorism overlaps so extensively with the list of problem states that are pursuing WMD capabilities.” Many countries, such as Iran, Libya, Syria, and North Korea, are thought to have, or actually

have, active nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons programs. Although Libya has recently acknowledged its nuclear weapons program and has invited international inspectors to oversee the dismantling of its program, it is very easy for one of these other states to provide terrorist groups with one of these weapons.

As President Bush, alluding to the CBRN threat, stated: “Now, shadowy networks of individuals can bring great chaos and suffering to our shores for less than it costs to purchase a single tank” (National Security Strategy, 2002). As a result, the United States can no longer afford to wait for 30 years for its economic and diplomatic efforts, unassisted by a credible threat of military force, to take affect such as it did with Libya. The threats facing the U.S. today are too grave. America must act against these emerging threats before they are “fully formed.”

#### **D. METHODOLOGY**

The analysis of this thesis is based on the hypothesis that prior to 9-11, the limited employment of military force, with an unwillingness to escalate military action when necessary, was relatively ineffective at modifying the behavior of state sponsors of terrorism. Using military force in this manner created an environment in which the U.S. relied on diplomatic efforts unaided by the credible military threat necessary to strengthen those efforts at persuasion. The United States’ willingness to escalate military actions against state sponsors of terrorism since the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, however, has produced the credible military threat necessary to strengthen diplomatic efforts and is thus an effective instrument of national power, capable of playing a vital role in ending, or at least reducing, state-sponsored terrorism. Therefore, it is important to understand the military’s role in ending state-sponsored terrorism due to the grave threat terrorism poses to the security of the United States.

To prove this hypothesis, this thesis begins by explaining state-sponsored terrorism. Chapter II provides a basic understanding of why it is of utmost importance to dissuade state support for terrorism. The chapter defines state-sponsored terrorism, examining who the sponsors are, and the rationality of their decision to provide support to terrorist organizations.

Chapter III provides two historical cases where military response was used in an effort to coerce state sponsors to change their behavior. The cases selected were chosen

to illustrate the difficulty the U.S. military had in presenting a credible threat to state sponsors based on its limited counterterrorism role. The two cases are: Operation El Dorado Canyon, the U.S. military retaliation against Libyan state-sponsored terrorism and Operation Infinite Reach, the U.S. cruise missile strikes following the terrorist attacks against the U.S. Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. Operation Infinite Reach targeted two countries in an effort to disrupt the terrorist's operations and to preempt future attacks: Sudan, the only state sponsor the U.S. intelligence community associated with al Qaeda at the time, and Afghanistan, which although not recognized as a legitimate state by the U.S., was essential in providing the extensive support bin Laden and al Qaeda required (Simon & Benjamin, 2002, p. 258). This thesis also examines the U.S.S. COLE incident in order to show U.S. policymakers' realization of the necessity to restructure the military's counterterrorism role in order for it to become a more coercive instrument of the U.S. national strategy against terrorism.

Operation El Dorado Canyon is important in any study dealing with state-sponsored terrorism. This operation is one of the most thoroughly studied and documented cases of military response to state-sponsored terrorism. More importantly, El Dorado Canyon was, as Tim Zimmerman (1994) states, "... the first formal step in a comprehensive and intensive strategy of coercive diplomacy" (p. 201).

Operation Infinite Reach demonstrates the increasing reliance on cruise missile attacks as the foundation of the United States' coercive military strategy. It highlights the unwillingness of the U.S. to risk military forces when dealing with terrorists and the states sponsoring them. This case is also important because it brings to the forefront the new terrorist threat facing the United States: terrorists groups more fluid and multinational than the older organizations and state-sponsored surrogates.

The U.S.S. COLE bombing in Yemen is selected because it brings to the forefront the realization by U.S. policymakers that the military instrument of national power was incapable of coercing states to cease their support of terrorists such as Usama bin Laden. During this time period, policymakers realized that for military force to be effective, the administration had to willingly escalate the use of military force beyond "one time" cruise missile attacks.

Chapter IV discusses coercion theory, providing a framework for understanding what the U.S. is attempting to accomplish with its military strategy. This chapter begins by discussing the military's role in the United States' overarching diplomatic coercive strategy. The focus then turns to military coercion, highlighting the attributes of a coercive military strategy and the limitations to its use.

Combining the information presented in previous chapters, Chapter V uses game theory to analyze why military force was ineffective at coercing state sponsors in the past, while also identifying what changes have occurred enabling the U.S. to possess a coercive military capability. This chapter examines the U.S. military strategy in dealing with state-sponsored terrorism before September 11, 2001; analyzing why states continued to sponsor terrorism even though the U.S. showed some willingness to use militarily force. Following this analysis, the chapter examines the post 9-11 environment to develop an understanding of why this thesis argues the U.S. now possesses a credible military threat capable of coercing states to curtail their sponsorship of terrorist organizations.

Finally, Chapter VI summarizes the findings of this thesis. It also identifies additional considerations and areas of study deemed necessary in analyzing the future role of the U.S. military against state sponsors of terrorism.

## II. STATE-SPONSORED TERRORISM

### A. INTRODUCTION

Terrorism is hardly a new phenomenon. State support for terrorism, in particular, dates back to the early 1900s. Serbia's support of the terrorist organization Black Hand, which was responsible for assassinating Austrian Archduke Ferdinand in 1914—an act that helped start World War I—is one of the earliest known examples (Collins, 2004, p. 2).

States sponsor terrorist organizations and groups in order to further their own state goals and beliefs. Some states find terrorism a cheap and deadly weapon capable of making America and its allies suffer. Other states use it to try to force changes in policy and to weaken U.S. resolve on other issues (Operations Directorate, 2001). Principally, states support terrorist organizations because they sympathize with the ideological orientation and the political goals of terrorists. Stephen Collins (2004) suggests that although early episodes of state-supported violence can be categorized as covert acts of war, contemporary state-supported terrorism produces a different form of political violence (p. 2). The violent acts fostered under this practice conform to the conventional description of terrorism which Collins defines as, "covert violence against non-combatants for the purpose of creating an atmosphere of fear and of intimidating a wide audience, so as to advance a social or political agenda" (p. 2). This form of state supported violence, developing in the mid to late twentieth century with the proliferation of Marxist revolutionary organizations, Palestinian-related terrorist groups, and also following the rise of state radicalism in the Middle East, including Libya and Iran, appears to be a new phenomenon in international relations (p. 2).

Countries sponsoring and supporting terrorism impede the efforts of the United States and the international community to fight terrorism. Until states that support terrorism cease such sponsorship, they remain a critical foundation for terrorist groups and their operations. As the 2002 Patterns of Global Terrorism states: "Without state sponsors, terrorist groups would have a much more difficult time obtaining the funds, weapons, materials, and secure areas they require to plan and conduct operations" (p. 76).

## **B. STATE SPONSORS OF TERRORISM**

In December 1979, the U.S. State Department began designating state sponsors of terrorism. The designation and the harsh penalties in trade and international relations coinciding with this label are mechanisms the United States employs to isolate nations using terrorism as a means of political expression. U.S. policy seeks to pressure and isolate state sponsors to persuade renouncement of the use of terrorism, end support to terrorist organizations, and bring terrorist to justice for past crimes (Overview of State-Sponsored Terrorism, 2001).

Eight countries have been placed on the State Department's list since the establishment of this formal designation. Currently seven countries remain on the list: only South Yemen has been removed because it ceased to exist as a state upon its merger with the Yemen Arab Republic. These countries include Cuba (1982, 1986), Iran (1980, 1984), Iraq (1979; lifted 1982; re-imposed 1990), Libya (1979, 1985; with the United Nations 1992, 1993), North Korea (1988), Syria (1979, 1986), and Sudan (1993) (Tucker, 1997, p. 88). These dates are significant because they show that the economic sanctions and military reprisals used in the past have not been very effective in modifying these states' behavior and stopping their support of terrorism (Hoffman, 1998, p. 191). Therefore, although it is evident that some of these countries have taken steps to cooperate in the global war on terrorism, most continue the very actions that led them to be declared state sponsors (Patterns of Global Terrorism, 2004, p. 85).

### **1. Cuba**

Cuba is not known to sponsor terrorist activity in recent years. This state does, however, continue to provide sanctuary for known terrorists and U.S. fugitives. Furthermore, Cuba remains opposed to the U.S. led Coalition prosecuting the war on global terrorism and is actively critical of many associated U.S. policies and actions. On repeated occasions, Cuba sent agents to U.S. missions around the world who provided false leads designed to subvert the post-September 11 investigation (Patterns of Global Terrorism, 2004, p. 86-88).

### **2. Iran**

Iran remained the most active state sponsor of terrorism in 2003. Its Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and Ministry of Intelligence and Security were involved in

the planning of and support for terrorist acts. Iran continues to provide safehavens for known terrorists to include members of al-Qaeda. During 2003, Iran maintained a high-profile in encouraging anti-Israeli activity, both rhetorically and operationally. Furthermore, Iran pursued a variety of policies in Iraq aimed at securing Tehran's interests there, some of which ran counter to those of the Coalition. Shortly after the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime, individuals with ties to the Revolutionary Guard attempted to infiltrate southern Iraq, and elements of the Iranian Government helped members of Ansar al-Islam transit and find safehaven in Iran (Patterns of Global Terrorism, 2004, p. 88).

### **3. Iraq**

Until the U.S. invasion in March 2003, Iraq was a safehaven, transit point, and operational base for groups and individuals who directed violence against the United States, Israel, and other countries. Iraq continued to rebuild its intelligence network which at one time supported a variety of international terrorist activities. Furthermore, Baghdad provided material, training, and financial assistance to Palestinian terrorist groups. Although Saddam Hussein and the Baath Party were removed from power in 2003, Iraq is still technically a designated state sponsor of terrorism. Its name can be removed from the list when the U.S. Secretary of State determines Iraq has fulfilled applicable statutory requirements, which include having a government in place that pledges not to support acts of terrorism in the future (Patterns of Global Terrorism, 2004, p. 88-91).

### **4. Libya**

Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi continues the efforts he undertook following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks to identify Libya with the war on terrorism and the struggle against Islamic extremists. Libya has taken responsibility for the Pan Am 103 bombing and is currently dismantling its weapons of mass destruction program, allowing United Nations (U.N.) inspectors access to key sites (Patterns of Global Terrorism, 2004, p. 91). The White House states the U.S. will "continuously evaluate the range of bilateral sanctions that remain in place relating to Libya" as its government moves toward totally dismantling its weapons of mass destruction program and adheres to its renunciation of terrorism (as cited in Hunt, 2004, p. A7).

## **5. North Korea**

North Korea is not known to have directly sponsored any terrorist acts since 1987. It has, however, sold weapons to several terrorist groups. Furthermore, North Korea is known to possess weapons of mass destruction that threaten the security of the United States, especially if sold to terrorist groups. Despite the urging of the international community, North Korea did not take substantial steps to cooperate in efforts to combat terrorism as required under United Nations Security Resolution 1373 (Patterns of Global Terrorism, 2004, p. 91-92).

## **6. Sudan**

Sudan began cooperating with U.S. counterterrorism efforts before the 9-11 attacks. This close relationship with various U.S. Government agencies provides the ability to investigate and apprehend extremists suspected of involvement in terrorist activities. Concerns remain however, regarding Sudanese Government support for certain terrorist groups such as HAMAS and the Palestine Islamic Jihad (Patterns of Global Terrorism, 2004, p. 92-93).

## **7. Syria**

The Syrian Government continues to provide political and limited material support to a number of Palestinian groups, some of which have committed terrorist acts. Syria also continues to permit Iran to use Damascus as a transshipment point for resupplying Hizballah in Lebanon. The Syrian Government, however, has repeatedly assured the United States that it will take every possible measure to protect U.S. citizens and facilities from terrorists in Syria. Syria has cooperated significantly with the United States and other foreign governments against al-Qaeda, the Taliban, and other terrorist organizations and individuals. In 2003, Syria was instrumental in returning a sought-after terrorist planner to U.S. custody. Since the end of the war in Iraq, Syria has made efforts to tighten its borders with Iraq to limit the movement of anti-Coalition foreign fighters into Iraq (Patterns of Global Terrorism, 2004, p. 93).

Afghanistan was never placed on the U.S. State Department list of states sponsoring terrorism because the U.S. did not recognize the Taliban, which held power from 1996-2001, as a legitimate government (Snowden & Hayes, N.D.). The National Commission on Terrorism did, however, recommend that Afghanistan be added to the list

of state sponsors in its June 2000 report (Crenshaw, 2003, p. 333). Failing to recognize the Taliban does not eliminate the fact that this “illegitimate state government” in Afghanistan provided support to al Qaeda. The Taliban, which gained power through al Qaeda’s backing and support, in turn, permitted the operation of training facilities for terrorist groups and knowingly provided support to members of various terrorist organizations. In particular, the Taliban hosted Usama bin Laden, the mastermind of the attacks on the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, the U.S.S COLE bombing in Yemen, and the 9-11 terrorist attacks in New York, Washington D.C., and Pennsylvania. The U.S. offered the Taliban, through the Pakistani government, the opportunity to hand over bin Laden. The Taliban refused, and as a result, was removed from power by U.S. and coalition forces in 2001

The seven states identified by the U.S. State Department, plus Afghanistan, sponsor terrorism at varying degrees. The above information shows that each state sponsor does not pose the same degree of threat to U.S. national security. States such as Afghanistan and Iraq posed such a significant threat to the security of the United States that policymakers determined it was necessary to use large scale military force. In order for the U.S. to avoid expending significant resources by invading other states, such as Iran, the U.S. must ensure its military actions, when used, are of such a significant measure that they project a credible military threat to other state sponsors. As a result, these actions strengthen U.S. diplomatic efforts at persuasion, forcing other states, such as Libya and Sudan, to continue on their course of denouncing terrorism at an accelerated pace.

### **C. RATIONAL ACTORS**

In an effort to understand the decision making process essential in game theory analysis, it is important to view state sponsors’ actions as rational rather than irrational. An irrational action, Roxanne Euben (1995) states, “is that which is manifestly not self-interested, not efficiently goal-directed, erratic and inconsistent given the information available, a category in which behavior is often a function of habit, thoughtlessness, and faith” (p. 161). Rationality on the other hand, according to Graham Allison (1971) refers to “consistent, value-maximizing choice within specific constraints” (p. 30). From the outset, the goals and objectives of the agent are translated into a “payoff” or “utility” or

“preference” function, which represents “value” or “utility” of alternative sets of consequences. At a minimum, the leader ranks, in order of preference, each possible set of consequences in terms of values and objectives that might result from a particular course of action (p. 29).

The rational leader then chooses among the set of alternatives displayed before him in a particular situation. Some alternative courses of action may include more than a simple act, but the specific course of action chosen must be sufficiently precise in order to differentiate it from other alternatives. Attached to each alternative is a set of consequences or outcomes that ensures a particular alternative is chosen. Rational choice consists of selecting the alternative whose consequences rank highest in the decision-maker’s payoff function (Allison, 1971, pp. 29-30).

These states, therefore, pursue these courses of action while understanding the consequences associated with each decision. After determining various courses of action and analyzing the consequences associated with each, state leaders rank their preferences and then choose the course of action best suited to accomplish their objective. As Watman, Wilkening, Arquilla, and Nichicporuk (1995) state,

The only assumptions required by rational choice theory are that leaders develop preferences among their alternatives; that they rank their preferences ordinally, even if imperfectly; and that they choose the alternative best suited to accomplishing their objective, again even if imperfectly. Even if information is sparse and cognitive limitations prevent complete digestion of available information, this does not imply that leaders will act irrationally... (p. 21).

Coercing rational leaders to cease a particular course of action requires that the leaders learn. Effective learning, however, takes place only under certain conditions. It requires accurate and immediate feedback about the relation between the situational conditions and the appropriate response (Tversky & Kahneman, 1988, p. 187).

Einhorn and Hogarth note that the necessary feedback is often lacking for the decision-maker for four reasons. First, outcomes are commonly delayed and not easily attributable to a particular action. Second, variability in the environment degrades the reliability of the feedback, especially where outcomes of low probability are involved. Third, there is often no information regarding what the outcome would have been if

another decision had been chosen. Finally, most important decisions are unique and therefore provide little opportunity for learning (as cited in Tversky & Kahneman, 1988, pp. 187-188).

In the past, effective learning has proven to be lacking for state sponsors of terrorism because their support for terrorist acts and organizations has not generally elicited serious reprisals. Despite condemnations from Washington and other, mostly Western, governments, state sponsors of terrorism have been able to actively engage in trade, commerce, travel, and diplomacy; and their involvement in terrorism has rarely been met with military retaliation (Collins, 2004, p. 2).

As rational actors, however, states supporting terrorism are not immune to the costs of their actions. As Collins (2004) states: “As support for terrorism begins to jeopardize the core interests of regimes—security and prosperity—terrorists support becomes expendable” (p. 3). When externally applied pressures endanger a regime’s survival, state leaders will likely respond by deprioritizing, or even terminating, their support for terrorism.

#### **D. SUMMARY**

States support terrorism and terrorist organizations through a variety of measures and for a variety of reasons. In addition to state committed terrorism, foreign governments rationally provide a variety of logistic and operational support to terrorist organizations, allowing them to carry out their attacks. The list provided by the U.S. State Department is not inclusive. A multitude of additional states are continually monitored for the types and levels of support they provide terrorist organizations. For various reasons, however, these states are not currently on the “official list,” but their actions continue to impede the efforts of the United States and the international community to fight terrorism.

Although state committed terrorism has declined, state support for terrorism continues, with several states providing modest to significant levels of assistance to terrorists. As a result of the increasing lethality of terrorist acts, serious effort must be taken in identifying strategies to combat state support for international terrorism. The United States in particular cannot allow future incidents like those on September 11, 2001 to occur, in which four simultaneous attacks, carried out by members of al Qaeda with

the support of Afghanistan, exceeded all previous recorded acts of state-supported international terrorism combined (Collins, 2004, p. 3). Key among these strategies is the development of a military threat capable of persuading states to change their courses of action; something the U.S. lack in the past as the case studies in the next chapter will show.

### III. CASE STUDIES

#### A. INTRODUCTION

The United States' goal in dealing with state-sponsored terrorism is to persuade the opponent to stop an action already undertaken. As a result, the United States strives to develop a national strategy that effectively coerces state sponsors to cease their support of terrorism. One instrument of national power the U.S. utilizes in this effort is military force. As previously stated, prior to 9-11 the U.S. military was only called upon three times to conduct offensive military operations: 1) Libya in 1986; 2) Iraq in 1993; 3) and Sudan and Afghanistan in 1998. Furthermore, the U.S. contemplated military force in retaliation for additional terrorist attacks, such as the attack on the U.S.S. COLE in 2000, but decided against this option for various reasons (Rice's Testimony, 2004).

The cases discussed in this section demonstrate the evolution of military response to state-sponsored terrorist attacks leading up to September 11, 2001. This chapter begins with an examination of Operation El Dorado Canyon; the 1986 air attack against Libya for the La Belle disco bombing in West Berlin that killed three people, including two American GIs, and injured 200, including 70 Americans. This case presents what Tim Zimmerman calls, "...the first formal step in a comprehensive and intensive strategy of coercive diplomacy" (1994, p. 201).

The second case discussed is Operation Infinite Reach; the 1998 preemptive strike against the al Shifa pharmaceutical factory in Sudan, which the U.S. intelligence community identified as the only state sponsor associated with al Qaeda, and the retaliatory strike against Afghanistan, categorized as an illegitimate state by the U.S., for its support of Usama bin Laden's bombings of the U.S. Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. This case demonstrates the increasing reliance on cruise missile attacks as the foundation of the U.S. coercive military strategy against states sponsoring terrorist attacks.

Finally, this thesis examines the U.S.S. COLE bombing in Yemen in 2000. This case is selected because it highlights the realization by U.S. policymakers that the military instrument of national strategy was unable, as utilized at the time, to effectively coerce states to cease their support of terrorists such as Usama bin Laden. The type of

military force required, although understood prior to 9-11, did not gain the support required until America was attacked on its soil in 2001.

## **B. OPERATION EL DORADO CANYON**

### **1. Background**

Libya's support for terrorism began in the earliest days of the Qadhafi regime. As early as 1972, Qadhafi publicly offered to help extremist movements, including the Provisional Irish Republican Army and the Black Power movement in the United States. In addition, Qadhafi vowed to support any group in the Middle East willing to attack Israel. In 1973, Qadhafi dispatched terrorists to Italy with orders to shoot down an Israeli airliner and, as early as 1975, ordered the murder of Libyan dissidents living abroad: although dissidents historically posed little, if any, threat to Qadhafi's rule, he concentrated on eliminating them (Patterns of Global Terrorism, 1992, p. 69).

Libyan support for terrorism dramatically escalated in the 1980s with the United States representing a principal target. Acts of terrorism supported or sponsored by Libya reached a high point between 1984 and the 1986 U.S. strike on Libya, with the Qadhafi regime linked to 51 acts of terrorism (see Table 1). As a result, a consistent adversarial and combustible relationship was established between the Reagan administration and Libya's Colonel Muammar Qadhafi. For the first five years of the Reagan administration, the relationship was characterized by "derogatory rhetoric, occasional clashes, economic and political pressures, and desultory covert U.S. attempts" to thwart Qadhafi's ambitions and undermine his leadership (Zimmerman, 1994, p. 201). However, in 1985, the growing problem of international terrorism, combined with Qadhafi's increased involvement in and support of terrorism, forced the Reagan administration to refocus its policies with regard to Libya. In January 1986, the administration took, what Tim Zimmerman refers to as, "...the first formal step in a comprehensive and intensive strategy of coercive diplomacy" (p. 201). As Secretary of State George Schulz declared in January 1986:

The worst thing we could do to our moderate friends in the region is to demonstrate that extremists' policies succeed and that the United States is impotent to deal with such challenges. If we are to be a factor in the region—if we want countries to take risks for peace relying on our support—then we had better show that power is an effective counterweight to extremism (as cited in Zimmerman, 1994, p. 202)

Thus, beginning in 1986 the Reagan administration “set in motion” a policy utilizing coherent and escalating political, economic, and military pressures in an attempt to achieve the declared objective of ending Qadhafi’s sponsorship of international terrorism. President Reagan argued that “by providing material support to terrorist groups which attack U.S. citizens, Libya engaged in armed aggression against the United States under established principles of international law, just as if it had used its own armed forces.” Reagan further stated that, “If these steps do not end Qadhafi’s terrorism, I promise you that further steps will be taken” (as cited in Zimmerman, 1994, pp. 202-203).

Year	Number of Attacks	Year	Number of Attacks
1981	8	1991	0
1982	0	1992	0
1983	1	1993	1
1984	25	1994	0
1985	17	1995	0
1986	19	1996	0
pre-airstrike	9	1997	0
post-airstrike	10	1998	0
1987	7	1999	0
1988	2	2000	0
1989	1		
1990	2		

Table 1. Libyan Supported Terrorist Attacks  
(After Collins, 2004, p. 5)

At the end of 1985, many members of the Reagan administration—particularly Secretary of State Shultz and the National Security Council (NSC) staff—were in favor of retaliating immediately against Qadhafi for recent terrorist attacks. Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger and the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), however, were opposed to any quick resort to military action. They suggested pursuing a “Try-and-See

Approach,” an approach favoring a more considered response that left the option of military reprisal for future war, rather than aggressive military action, as suggested by the NSC (Zimmerman, 1994, p. 205).

First, Secretary of Defense Weinberger and the JCS asserted it was difficult to find targets in Libya directly related to the attacks. As Zimmerman (1994) states, “This point spoke directly to the president’s preference for using force as an instrument of counterterrorism only if it could target people or facilities directly related to the terrorism and if the use of force was proportional to the terrorist act as well” (p. 205). Second, Weinberger argued that immediate military action would put American lives in danger. Although President Reagan previously asked Americans to leave Libya in 1981, more than 1500 had returned to Libya by the end of 1985; hence, the U.S. needed to provide adequate time for Americans to leave the country. Third, Weinberger argued that all other political and economic sanctions were not yet exhausted and that force should only be used as a last resort. Finally, Weinberger argued that if force was implemented, it should be used under conditions of overwhelming U.S. military superiority (Zimmerman, 1994, pp. 205-206). At the time, the U.S. did not have sufficient forces in the region to project overwhelming military superiority: getting sufficient forces into the region required time.

An additional factor weighing in favor of a try-and-see approach was that the Reagan administration hoped to cultivate unity among its allies. The administration felt that any antiterrorism policy, particularly one focused on coercing Qadhafi, would be more effective if Qadhafi felt isolated from his most important trading partners. Furthermore, a unified approach eliminated focus on the United States as the sole “aggressor,” thus minimizing the political or terrorist backlash that might be “catalyzed” by a campaign against terrorism (Zimmerman, 1994, p. 206).

## **2. The Try-and-See Approach**

The first phase of the Reagan administrations’ try-and-see approach lasted from December 27, 1985 until January 23, 1986. The primary focus during this phase was on the application of additional political and economic pressures on Qadhafi. This was achieved by expanding the restrictions placed upon Libya in 1982 and encouraging the United States’ European allies to participate in the campaign against Qadhafi.

On January 7, 1986 President Reagan increased the sanctions by precluding any direct U.S. contribution to the Libyan economy and asked all Americans to leave by February 1 or face “appropriate penalties” upon their return home. European support of these measures was critical to putting real economic and political pressure on Libya, in addition to the psychological value of a united front (Zimmerman, 2004, p. 207). Allied response, however, amounted to a rejection of the U.S. policy of pressuring Qadhafi. As a result, on January 15 Qadhafi declared a “receding threat of American military action,” re-condoned earlier terrorist attacks, and, referring to the various Arab groups under his authority, vowed that “we shall train them for terrorist and suicide missions and allocate ...all the weapons needed” (as cited in Zimmerman, 1994, p. 208).

On January 23, with two aircraft carriers at his disposal in the Mediterranean, Reagan ordered a week of naval flight operations off the coast of Libya. The order marked the second phase of the try-and-see approach: the show of military force. The first goal of this phase, which ended on March 14, 1986, was designed to demonstrate that neither Qadhafi’s warnings, nor the Soviet Unions’ decision to place a warship off of Libya’s coast, would prevent the United States from making a show of force. The second goal of this phase was a warning to U.S. allies that unless they applied stiffer sanctions against Libya, the U.S. might initiate military operations of a “more punitive nature.” The third goal was to convince other states in the region that the United States was losing patience with state-sponsored terrorism and was prepared to back up rhetoric with action. Finally, the U.S. was determined to wear down and test the effectiveness of Qadhafi’s antiaircraft and command and control defenses (Zimmerman, 1994, p. 209).

The naval flight operations marked a shift from the administration’s initial emphasis on economic and political measures to an emphasis on military pressure. The exercises, however, had little impact on the United States’ allies or Qadhafi. Despite the increasing military aspect, allied governments did not modify their policies with regard to Libya. Furthermore, Qadhafi seized this opportunity, attempting to further divide the United States from Europe, by pursuing his own form of coercive diplomacy by threatening to wage war in the Mediterranean. Libya also continued to conduct surveillance on American diplomats in preparation for possible terrorist attacks (Zimmerman, 1994, p. 210). Qadhafi’s actions led President Reagan to conclude that

Qadhafi “was not getting the message,” and thus raised the stakes again, authorizing a plan to have U.S. naval forces cross the “line of death” into the Gulf of Sydra (pp. 210-211).

The arrival of the third U.S. aircraft carrier in the region marked the beginning of phase three of the try-and-see approach. This phase, which lasted from the March 14, 1986 decision to cross the “line of death” until the April 14, 1986 bombing raid, was designed to provoke a military clash with Qadhafi. Although the administration’s expectation that Qadhafi would respond to U.S. activity below 32°30’ N was realized on March 24, no Americans were killed; consequently, the plan for a full attack on Libyan targets was not implemented. On March 27, three days ahead of schedule, the naval exercise was terminated due to pressure from members of Congress and foreign leaders.

Despite the course of events, Qadhafi refused to back down and once again raised the stakes, publicly declaring, “It is time for confrontation, for war. If the [United States] wants to expand the struggle, we will carry it all over the world” (as cited in Zimmerman, 1994, p. 213). On April 5, three days after the bombing of a TWA flight that killed four Americans, the Qadhafi government bombed the La Belle discotheque in West Berlin killing three people, including two Americans, and injuring more than 100, approximately 70 of whom were U.S. military personnel.

The La Belle bombing provided the justification President Reagan needed to launch a full-scale bombing raid. Of the 36 targets considered, the five targets chosen were all linked to Qadhafi’s involvement with terrorism. These targets were chosen in order to send the appropriate message, as well as, to provide legal grounds for the attack under Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, which recognizes an inherent right of self defense.

In addition to refining its target list, the administration, once again, attempted to maximize the coercive impact by soliciting support from its European allies. Of the five governments consulted, only Britain agreed to provide support by authorizing the use of its airbases where U.S. F-111s were stationed. Undeterred by the lack of allied support, the U.S. Air Force and Navy bombed the five “authorized” targets on April 14 (Zimmerman, 1994, p. 215).

The bombing on April 14 was the culmination of President Reagan's try-and-see approach. Although Reagan had no illusions of ending Qadhafi's reign of terror with a single bombing operation, he hoped to send a message to the Libyan leader that the price of his support for terrorism was too high and would no longer be tolerated.

### 3. Evaluation of Operation El Dorado Canyon

The decline in Libyan sponsored terrorist attacks in the years following the U.S. air strikes suggests a success in the use of military force in combating state-sponsored terrorism. This effectiveness, however, must be examined in terms of the ultimate objective: to reduce the threat Libyan sponsored terrorism presented to American lives. Despite the decrease in the number of Libya sponsored attacks following the U.S. airstrike, Libyan sponsored terrorism resulted in the loss of more lives in the years after Operation El Dorado Canyon (See Table 2). In the five years prior to the U.S. airstrike, Libyan supported terrorism claimed the lives of 91 individuals. As Stephen Collins' (2004) data depicts, over a similar length of time after the airstrike, Libyan sponsored terrorism claimed 491 lives: a 440 percent increase in the fatality rate of Libyan supported terror (p. 6).

Year	Casualties	Year	Casualties
1981	2 Deaths	1990	0
1982	0	1991	0
1983	0	1992	0
1984	6 Deaths, 30 Injured	1993	1 Execution
1985	80 Deaths, 100 Injured	1994	0
1986	50 Deaths, 381 Injured	1995	0
pre-strike	3 Deaths, 229 Injured	1996	0
post-strike	47 Deaths, 151 Injured	1997	0
1987	12 Deaths, 52 Injured	1998	0
1988	270 Deaths	1999	0
1989	171 Deaths	2000	0

Table 2. Casualties from Libyan Supported Terrorism

(From Collins, 2004, p. 6)

Furthermore, the intensity of Libyan terrorist attacks following the airstrike impacted American lives disproportionately (See Table 3). The number of attacks on

Americans decreased, falling from 15 attacks in the 5 years before the airstrike, to about 10 incidents in the five year span following U.S. military action. The statistics on U.S. casualties, however, demonstrate Americans suffered far greater after El Dorado Canyon. Ten Americans died in the pre-attack period. In the post-attack period, the death toll climbed to 202, a figure nearly 20 times larger than before U.S. military action. Furthermore, total casualties increased from 99 in the pre-attack period to 204 in the post-attack period.

Year	Attacks	Casualties	Year	Attack	Casualties
1981	6	2 U.S. deaths	1990	0	0
1982	0		1991	0	0
1983	1	0 U.S. casualties	1992	0	0
1984	1	0 U.S. casualties	1993	0	0
1985	2	6 U.S. deaths, 9 injured	1994	0	0
1986	12	5 U.S. deaths, 81 injured	1995	0	0
pre-strike	5	2 U.S. deaths, 79 injured	1996	0	0
		1 kidnapping	1997	0	0
post-strike	7	3 U.S. deaths, 2 injured	1998	0	0
1987	1	3 U.S. deaths	1999	0	0
1988	1	189 U.S. deaths	2000	0	0
1989	1	7 U.S. deaths			

Table 3. Libyan Supported Attacks on U.S. Targets  
(From Collins, 2004, p. 7)

The difference in the death toll before and after the Operation El Dorado Canyon airstrikes is unnerving. Following the attacks, the death toll from Libyan sponsored terrorism increased more than 400 percent. Americans, taken alone, fared far worse with a 2,000 percent rise in the death toll. Even discounting the fatalities due to the bombings of Pan Am 103 and UTA 772, Libyan supported terrorism resulted in a significant increase in fatalities following the airstrikes of Operation El Dorado Canyon (Collins, 2004, p. 8). The Pan Am 103 and UTA 772 bombings, however, demonstrate Libya's emphasis on concentrating resources and time on carrying out more lethal and sophisticated attacks and, therefore, should not be discounted. As Collins states; "It seems quite clear that as the Qadhafi regime was attempting to mask its activity in

international terrorism, it embarked on a strategy of reducing the number of attacks it participated in, and instead concentrated its time and resources on carrying out more sophisticated and lethal attacks” (p. 8).

The U.S. death toll statistics would have been higher had New Jersey State Troopers not inadvertently thwarted another Libyan sponsored terror attack. Following El Dorado Canyon, Qadhafi procured some “hired guns” from the Japanese Red Army Faction, who he paid to carry out attacks on behalf of Libya. In April 1988, Qadhafi sent Yu Kikumura, a Japanese Red Army terrorist, to the United States to carry out an attack coinciding with the second anniversary of the U.S bombing. Kikumura’s orders were to carry out his terrorist attack in the financial center of New York. When he was arrested on the New Jersey Turnpike, officials found several hallowed-out fire extinguishers containing black powder and roofing nails, crude anti-personnel devices, in the trunk of his car (Hoffman, 2001, p. xv). The casualty rate, had Kikumura successfully accomplished his mission, could have exceeded all previous terrorist attacks at that time.

#### **4. United Nations’ Sanctions**

The ten minute bombing attack by the United States did not single handedly bring about a drastic change in Libya’s policy regarding terrorism. Although Qadhafi was visibly shaken by the airstrikes, evidenced by his reaction to the death of his daughter and the brief instability in the region, he maintained his hold on power and increased the lethality of his more limited, sophisticated terrorist attacks. Some analysts suggest that Qadhafi’s domestic position was actually strengthened by the raid. Ray Takeyh (2001) maintains that the U.S. attack “only enhanced Qadhafi’s domestic power and led to his lionization in the developing world.”

Libya did begin taking steps to end its sponsorship of terrorist attacks beginning in the early 1990s. This, however, is more likely related to the increase in pressure from the international community, as evidence emerged indicating Libya’s responsibility for the bombings of Pan Am 103 and UTA 772. The campaign initiated in late 1991 by the United States, Britain, and France to gain international support materialized on January 21, 1992 with the passage of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 731. UNSCR 731 condemned the bombings and endorsed demands that Libya comply with a series of steps, including turning over for trial two Libyan intelligence agents indicted by

the U.S. and Britain for their role in the bombing of Pan Am flight 103. The resolution also required that Libya accept responsibility for the bombing and disclose all evidence related to it, pay appropriate compensation, satisfy French demands regarding Libya's role in bombing UTA Flight 772, and cease all forms of terrorism (Patterns of Global Terrorism, 1993).

Libya's failure to comply with this resolution led to the passage of UNSCR 748 on March 30, 1992. UNSCR 748 imposed mandatory sanctions against Libya for its failure to meet UNSCR 731 demands. These sanctions included arms and civil aviation embargos on Libya, a demand that Libyan Arab Airlines offices be closed, and a requirement that all states reduce Libya's diplomatic presence abroad (Patterns of Global Terrorism, 1993, p. 23).

Libya's continued defiance of these resolutions resulted in the passage of UNSCR 883 on November 11, 1993. UNSCR 883 imposed a limited asset freeze and oil technology embargo on Libya and significantly tightened up existing sanctions (Patterns of Global Terrorism, 1994, p. 24). Furthermore, in 1996, the U.S. Congress passed the Iran and Libya Sanctions Act of 1996. The Act imposed new sanctions on companies that invest in the development of either country's petroleum resources. The law intended to help deny revenues that could be used to finance international terrorism (Patterns of Global Terrorism, 1997).

## **5. Summary**

The U.S. airstrikes of Operation El Dorado Canyon did not have the ultimate effect policymakers had hoped. Not only did these airstrikes fail to coerce Libya to end its support of terrorism, the airstrikes also failed to create the credible military threat necessary for coercive diplomacy to be effective. Although military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq finally caused Libya to comply with international demands to end its ties with terrorism, as will be discussed in Chapter 5, the evidence suggests the results of the UN resolutions, along with U.S. economic and diplomatic sanctions placed on Libya, ultimately forced Libya to begin taking the necessary steps to disassociate itself with international terrorism.

## C. OPERATION INFINITE REACH

### 1. Background

The bombings of the U.S. Embassies in Nairobi, Kenya and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania on August 7, 1998 marked the emergence of Usama bin Laden and the al Qaeda terrorist network as a transnational terrorist organization that threatened the security of the United States of America. Bin Laden was initially identified as a serious threat during the investigation following the World Trade Center bombing in 1993, yet prior to 1998 he was not directly linked to any overt attacks against American targets. After being expelled from Saudi Arabia in 1991, bin Laden moved to Sudan where he remained until May 1996, when the United States and Saudi Arabian governments convinced Sudan to expel him. Following his departure from Sudan, bin Laden moved his operations to Afghanistan where he became “very vocal in expressing his approval of intent to use terrorism” (Crenshaw, 2003, p. 322). Bin Laden aggressively backed the Taliban government and in return, was permitted to set-up unimpeded operations for his al Qaeda network on Afghanistan soil. Furthermore, bin Laden continued his support network with the Sudanese government. In 1995, U.S. intelligence agencies found that bin Laden and Sudan were cooperating to produce chemical weapons to be used against the United States and Saudi Arabia. In the summer of 1997, U.S. suspicions that Sudan might be developing chemical weapons deepened. The United States began investigating the Al Shifa pharmaceuticals plant, and in July and August 1998, the CIA issued intelligence reports detailing links between the plant and bin Laden (Crenshaw, 2003, p. 323). Thus, although it is well known that bin Laden financed al Qaeda and other terrorist organizations using his own money, he continued to seek support from state governments willing to sponsor his terrorist organization and activities (Newman, Whitelaw, Auster, Charski, and Cook, 1998). A sealed indictment in June 1998 provided a basis for the arrests of twenty-one al Qaeda militants. The indictment charged bin Laden and his associates with attacks on U.S. and UN troops in Somalia and accused him of leading a conspiracy in concert with Sudan, Iraq, and Iran (Crenshaw, 2003, pp. 322-323).

Focusing on intelligence that bin Laden and other high level terrorist leaders would be meeting at a camp in Afghanistan, President Clinton organized a planning

effort, code-named “Operation Infinite Reach.” The code name of the operation was not coincidental; the administration was determined to demonstrate that it could strike two targets simultaneously in an effort to match the adversary (Crenshaw, 2003, pp. 325-326). The President’s advisors recommended the U.S. should strike whether or not there was firm evidence the terrorist leaders were at the camp. Secretary of Defense William Cohen, testifying before the 9-11 Commission, stated it was important to send a signal that the United States was coming and was not going to tolerate terrorist activity against America (The Military, N.D.).

Discussed during this planning session was the question of whether to strike other al Qaeda targets in Sudan: namely the Al Shifa pharmaceutical plant which Presidential aides believed was manufacturing VX nerve gas with bin Laden’s financial support. Enough evidence had been gathered by August 20, 1998 to justify military action and, as a result, President Clinton authorized the strikes against the camps in Afghanistan and the pharmaceutical plant in Sudan.

The United States launched six or seven cruise missiles against the Al Shifa plant, at night, in order to avoid civilian casualties, and approximately 70 missiles at a complex of base, support, and training camps used by bin Laden in Afghanistan on August 20, thirteen days after the embassy bombings (Crenshaw, 2003, pp. 324-325). The missiles hit their intended targets in Afghanistan, but neither bin Laden nor any other terrorist leaders were killed.

The decision to destroy the pharmaceutical plant, however, became controversial. Many argued that the decision to target the Al Shifa plant was “contentious” (p. 326). Critics argue there was little to no evidence linking the plant to chemical weapons being produced for bin Laden. There are two reasons, however, why the U.S. was justified in targeting the plant. First, top U.S. officials contend there was adequate evidence linking the plant to bin Laden. Faced with the possibility of the use of VX nerve gas by al Qaeda, one of the most deadly substances ever synthesized, the White House felt a sense of urgency to pursue a strategy of preempting threats militarily (Benjamin & Simon, 2002, p. 259). Traces of Empta, a precursor chemical for the production of VX nerve gas, taken from soil samples at the plant by the CIA, strengthened the Clinton administration’s perception of imminent danger. National Security Advisor Sandy

Berger stated, “What if we do not hit it [the Al Shifa plant] and then, after an attack, nerve gas is released in the New York City subway? What will we say then?” (as cited in Benjamin & Simon, 2002, p. 260).

Second, the United States linked Sudan’s support to the two embassy bombings. As Steven Simon, senior director for counterterrorism from 1998 to 1999 and Daniel Benjamin (2002), director for counterterrorism on the National Security Council staff from 1998 to 1999 state,

The question nagged: how could any group execute such a pair of attacks without the help of a state sponsor? The intelligence community maintained that it had no indications of any noteworthy relationship between al Qaeda and a state sponsor of terror, except Sudan (p. 263).

With little infrastructure to target in Sudan, the Clinton Administration was limited in its options to send a message that Sudan’s continued support for terrorism would not be tolerated.

These strikes were not envisioned as the sole military action to be taken against bin Laden and the states sponsoring him. On August 20, 1998, General Hugh Shelton, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, issued a planning order, code-named “Operation Infinite Resolve,” for follow-on strikes. The day after the strikes, President Clinton and his principal advisors began considering these follow-on options. A few days later the National Security Council (NSC) staff’s National Coordinator for Counterterrorism, Richard Clarke, informed other senior officials that President Clinton was inclined to launch further strikes sooner than later (The Military, N.D.)

Active consideration of follow-on strikes continued into September, but by October 1998, the urgent interest in launching follow-on strikes dissipated. Deputy National Security Advisor James Steinberg noted that additional cruise missile strikes offered “little benefit, lots of blowback against [a] bomb happy U.S.” (as cited in The Military, N.D.). The loss of interest thus ended the coercive military strategy against bin Laden and the supporting states of Afghanistan and Sudan.

## **2. Evaluation of Operation Infinite Reach**

Operation Infinite Reach demonstrated the reliance of the U.S. on cruise missiles as the “weapon of choice.” The Tomahawk’s long range, lethality, and accuracy made it the missile of choice (The Military, N.D.). Furthermore, President Clinton’s reluctance

to put American lives at risk, at least in part, was due to the fallout from the deaths of American servicemen in Somalia in 1993. Cruise missiles, therefore, allowed the administration to strike at bin Laden, Afghanistan, and Sudan without putting U.S. military forces in harm's way. Clinton again demonstrated this resolve in Serbia in 1999 when he elected not to use U.S. ground forces to defeat Milosevic. Instead, President Clinton relied on U.S. and NATO air forces to accomplish the objective. Hence, it became apparent that U.S. policymakers, at the time, were very unwilling to escalate the use of military force beyond the use of air power in order to accomplish their objectives.

The limited threat U.S. bombing posed to the Taliban enforced their resolve to ignore demands from the U.S. and the international community to hand over bin Laden. The Taliban's refusal to comply with an October 1999 United Nations Security Council demand to turn over bin Laden within 30 days to a country where he could be tried was ignored. In turn, the Security Council threatened to freeze Afghanistan's economic assets abroad and to curtail international flights by the national airline, an embargo the United States previously imposed unilaterally (Crenshaw, 2003, p. 328). Taliban leaders replied, however, that they would not turn over bin Laden. Wakil Ahmad Muttawakil, the Taliban's foreign minister replied, "We will never hand over Usama bin Laden, and we will not force him out. He will remain free in defiance of America . . . We will not hand him to an infidel nation" (as cited in Crenshaw, p. 328).

Although Sudan had taken steps to disassociate itself with terrorism prior to the cruise missile attacks of 1998, it continued to be an irritant to the United States. The threat posed by the Al Shifa plant, along with Sudan's link to the embassy bombings, demanded the U.S. take action. The U.S., however, apparently felt the military strikes did not produce the desired outcome. As a result, hard-liners within the administration argued for a tougher policy of isolation and pressure. Officials in the Africa bureaus of the State Department and the National Security Council backed legislation to give food assistance directly to Christian rebels in southern Sudan, who had been fighting the northern dominated Islamic government since the early 1980s (Crenshaw, 2003, p. 330). As Crenshaw states, ". . . the United States still seemed determined to isolate the regime even though the FBI reported that any former terrorist camps in Sudan had been vacated" (p. 330).

Furthermore, Sudan had been under intense pressure since April 1996 when the UN sanctioned the country for harboring individuals from the group that had attempted to assassinate Egyptian President Mubarak in June 1995. By the summer of 2000 Sudan was eager to see UN sanctions lifted and ambitiously lobbied for a regional seat on the Security Council (Overview of the Enemy, N.D.). The Sudanese government also reminded Washington that their behavior had changed as evidence by Sudan's president dismissing his radical Islamic mentor in December 1999 (Crenshaw, 2003, pp. 332-333). Thus it appears it was the result of sanctions, and not the cruise missile strikes against Al Shifa, that forced Sudan to continue on its course of action to disassociate itself with terrorism.

### **3. Summary**

Operation Infinite Reach did little to coerce Afghanistan to end its support for Usama bin Laden and his al Qaeda terrorist network, or force Sudan to continue on the path of disassociating itself with terrorism; a path already undertaken prior to the cruise missile strikes. Although it was the objective of the U.S. to send a message that the United States was coming and was not going to tolerate terrorist activity against America, there is little evidence that the message was received. First, the Taliban openly defied the international community's demand to hand over bin Laden and blatantly allowed him to continue training al Qaeda members in camps throughout their country while further developing plans to attack Americans. The presidential daily briefing of August 6, 2001 accentuated, "After U.S. missile strikes on his base in Afghanistan in 1998, bin Laden told followers he wanted to retaliate in Washington . . ." (Bin Laden Determined, 2001).

Second, the attacks on the Al Shifa pharmaceutical plant in Sudan was, at best, only a modest demonstration of force. Although this strike was primarily preemptive in nature, there is little doubt that the cruise missile attack failed to coerce Sudan to curtail its assistance to bin Laden. A follow-on strike, however, seemed an unlikely response given the fact that Sudan had, at that point, already expelled bin Laden. Furthermore, Sudan began taking measures to disassociate itself from radical Islamic groups. The best the U.S. could hope for in its decision to launch cruise missiles at the pharmaceutical plant, in addition to preempting a chemical attack, was to communicate to Sudan that providing further assistance to bin Laden would be similarly punished (Crenshaw, 2003,

p. 344). As Crenshaw states, “Sudan’s behavior improved, but probably not as the result of military force” (p. 344).

Thus, U.S. reliance on cruise missiles as the weapon of choice in Operation Infinite Reach, as well as the low likelihood of escalation, had little effect on coercing either Afghanistan or Sudan to curtail their sponsorship of terrorism. In the case of Afghanistan, the Taliban continued to openly support bin Laden’s quest to strike America, and in the case of Sudan, there is little evidence to suggest that Sudan’s behavior improved as the result of military force.

#### **D. U.S.S. COLE**

##### **1. Background**

On October 12, 2000, the U.S. Navy destroyer COLE was attacked by a small boat laden with explosives during a refueling stop in Aden, Yemen. The suicide terrorist attack killed 17 American sailors, wounded 39 others, and caused serious damage to the ship (Perl & O’Rourke, 2001). Jihadists previously tried to bomb the U.S.S. SULLIVANS using identical tactics in January 2000; the plot failed, however, when the skiff carrying the explosives sunk under the weight—something unknown to the U.S. until after the COLE attack. The FBI, CIA, and the Yemeni government launched investigations to determine who attacked the COLE. The Department of Defense’s primary role was providing aircraft for the interagency emergency response team kept on standby for such occasions (The Military, N.D.).

Immediately after the attack, National Security Advisor Sandy Berger asked the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Hugh Shelton, to quickly provide plans to attack bin Laden, who was suspected of initiating the attack. Shelton briefed Berger on the thirteen options developed by CENTCOM, including a “Phased Campaign Concept” for wider-ranging strikes, including strikes against the Taliban. The concept, however, did not include contingency plans for an invasion of Afghanistan which continue to support bin Laden and al Qaeda (The Military, N.D.).

In late 2000, President Clinton’s advisors received limited evidence linking al Qaeda to the attack, but could not establish that bin Laden himself had ordered the attack. The Department of Defense prepared plans to strike al Qaeda camps and Taliban targets with cruise missiles in case policymakers decided to respond. President Clinton, his

administration in the final days in office, elected to forgo the cruise missile attacks. The Bush administration, entering office in January 2001, was presented with the same assessment. President Bush also elected not to pursue the cruise missile option because officials in his administration did not feel this option would achieve the desired effect since the 1998 cruise missile attacks against targets in Afghanistan did little to coerce bin Laden to cease his terrorist activities or force the Taliban to cease their support (The Military, N.D.). As Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz stated, “The 1998 cruise missile strikes showed UBL and al Qaeda that they had nothing to fear from a U.S. response” (as cited in The Military, N.D.). Furthermore, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld told the 9-11 Commission the new president was determined not to repeat the Clinton administration’s tactic of “bouncing the rubble” by sending cruise missiles at al Qaeda camps of little strategic value in Afghanistan (Eggen and Mintz, 2004). As a result, the DoD elected to work on the force protection recommendations cited in the USS COLE Commission Report, rather than the response options presented by General Shelton.

## **2. Aftermath of the U.S.S. COLE Incident**

Although the bombing of the U.S.S. COLE occurred during the Clinton administration, little evidence was available to link al Qaeda and the Taliban to the event until weeks before a change in administrations. It wasn’t until mid-November 2000 that U.S investigators became aware of the role senior al Qaeda operatives Abd al-Rahim al-Nashiri and Tawfiq bin Attash (“Khallas”) played in the attack. Even then, the U.S. was uncertain as to whether the attack had been carried out under the direct orders of bin Laden himself. This was not confirmed until Nashiri, the operational commander of the attack on the COLE, and his assistant Khallas were captured in November 2002 and April 2003, respectively (Overview of the Enemy, N.D.). As a result, President Clinton was reluctant to initiate military strikes, although the DoD was prepared at the request of National Security Advisor Berger.

The Bush administration, having evidence that senior al Qaeda members were responsible for the attack, was determined not to pursue the same strategy the Clinton administration utilized in the past. President Bush and his staff were determined to develop a new policy; a policy that would eliminate the terrorist threat. As National

Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice stated to the 9-11 Commission, “We simply believe that the best approach was to put in place a plan that was going to eliminate this threat, not respond to an attack” (Rice’s Testimony, 2004). She further stated that “I do not believe to this day that it would have been a good thing to respond to the COLE, given the kinds of options that we were going to have.” The only way to deal with the threat was to end al Qaeda’s ability to use Afghanistan as a “sanctuary for its operations” (Intelligence Policy, N.D.).

The Bush administration realized that ending al Qaeda’s ability to use Afghanistan as a “sanctuary for its operations” required using large-scale military force. Initial estimates suggested such an operation would require sending 10,000 U.S. troops into Afghanistan, something neither Congress nor the American public was willing to support at the time. Deputy Secretary Wolfowitz warned it would be impossible to get Congress to support sending this many troops into Afghanistan to do “what the Soviet Union failed to do in the 1980s.” Vice Admiral Scott Fry, former operations director for the JCS, noted that “a two-or-four division plan would require a footprint [troop level] and force that was larger than the political leadership was willing to accept” (as cited in The Military, N.D.). Secretary Rumsfeld and Secretary of State Colin Powell, as well as former Secretary of Defense William Cohen and Secretary of State Madeline Albright, testified before the 9-11 Commission that there was little public or congressional appetite for military action against Afghanistan, which harbored al Qaeda, until after the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon (Eggen & Mintz, 2004,).

Even if the U.S. had gained the congressional and public support needed to attack Afghanistan at that time, as 9-11 Commissioner and former senator Bob Kerrey suggests, there is little evidence suggesting that the 9-11 attacks could have been prevented. As Secretary Powell stated, “Anything we might have done against al Qaeda in this period or against Usama bin Laden may or may not have had any influence on these people who were already in this country” (as cited in Eggen & Mintz, 2004,). Preventing future terrorist attacks requires a credible military threat; something the U.S lacked prior to 9-11.

### **3. Summary**

The period following the U.S.S. COLE attack was a turning point in the way policymakers viewed the role of military force in combating terrorist organizations and the states that sponsor and support them. With the inauguration of the Bush administration, U.S. policymakers began to formulate a plan to eliminate the terrorist threat. The administration realized that limited cruise missile strikes against rudimentary and inexpensive training camps would neither coerce the Taliban to hand over bin Laden, nor diminish their support of his operations. Instead, it was determined that large-scale military force would be required if the U.S. was to successfully eliminate the terrorist threat; a coercive response that did not gain support until after the attacks of September 11, 2001. As DCI Tenet stated, it took a “galvanizing force” to mobilize Americans to take the steps needed to meet the terrorist threat (Branigin, Barbash, & Pincus, 2004).

### **E. SUMMARY**

Operation El Dorado Canyon, Operation Infinite Reach, and the U.S.S. COLE attack show the difficulty in using military force to coerce a state to cease support of terrorism and terrorist organizations. Although each case is unique in its own sense, each illustrates the fact that military force, as used prior to 9-11, was neither successful at forcing the targeted states to change their behavior, nor was it able to produce the credible threat necessary for coercive diplomacy to be effective in general.

As for Libya, there was little to no effect in influencing Qadhafi to cease his terrorist activities. Although the number of terrorist incidents committed by the Libyan government decreased following the April 14, 1986 airstrikes, the lethality actually increased. The fact that Libya eventually committed itself to denouncing terrorism and turning over its weapons of mass destruction is more directly related to the U.S. and international diplomatic and economic sanctions levied against the country, along with the credible military threat possessed by the U.S. following military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, rather than the results of airstrikes carried out in Operation El Dorado Canyon.

Operation Infinite Reach, illustrating the U.S. reliance on cruise missiles as the weapons of choice, did little to convince the Taliban to hand over Usama bin Laden. In

fact, the strikes against al Qaeda camps inside Afghanistan not only strengthened the Taliban's resolve to support bin Laden, it also provoked bin Laden's determination to attack America.

Sudan, which began the process of disassociating itself from Islamic extremists and terrorists prior to the cruise missile strikes in 1998, was also unaffected by the military actions of Operation Infinite Reach. Other than preempting the possibility of future chemical attacks, the U.S. gained little in its effort to coerce Sudan to completely disassociate itself with terrorism.

Finally, the U.S.S. COLE incident was a turning point in the way policymakers viewed the role of military force in combating terrorist organizations and the states sponsoring and supporting them. Policymakers in the Bush administration realized that utilizing a military strategy relying solely on cruise missiles to coerce a state to end its sponsorship of a terrorist organization was unlikely to produce the desired result. Only after thorough reevaluation and consideration were American policymakers able to determine that a large scale military force was necessary for coercion to be successful; a force which gained support after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

As a result of policy decisions prior to September 11, 2001, military force played a very limited role against terrorist organizations. Due to the limited threat terrorists posed to America at that time, reliance on economic and diplomatic measures, unsupported by the threat of military force, remained the most effective instruments in altering the behavior of state-sponsors of terrorism. These instruments began showing success in the cases of Libya and Sudan. Such instruments, however, took years to become effective; a time frame unacceptable today due to the grave threat terrorist organizations, such as al Qaeda, present to the United States' security. Eliminating such a threat, according to CIA Deputy Director for Operations James Pavitt, requires robust, offensive engagement across the entire U.S. government (Intelligence Policy, N.D.); including a large scale military force.

## IV. COERCION

### A. INTRODUCTION

State sponsors impede the efforts of the United States to effectively fight the war on terrorism. As Davis and Jenkins (2002) point out, supportive states are one “set of actors” in the terrorist system which must be dealt with in order to successfully defeat terrorism (p.15). Accordingly, deterrence and coercion are two choices the U.S. has in dealing with state sponsors. Deterrence and coercion are related: both seek to manipulate costs and benefits. As Stephen Cimbala (1998) notes, each is a kind of influence process intended to affect the behavior of another state or non-state actor, yet the primary intended effects of deterrence and coercion differ (p. 15). Deterrence tries to prevent an action, while coercion tries to reverse an action already undertaken.

The objective of the United States in dealing with state sponsors of terrorism is to get them to stop sponsoring terrorism by manipulating their behavior through political and military means. It involves exerting pressure against the opponent in an attempt to compel his behavior in accordance with the wishes of the United States (Sullivan, 1995, p. 1).

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a framework for understanding what the U.S. is attempting to accomplish through its coercive strategy. This chapter begins by discussing coercive diplomacy to provide a general understanding of coercion theory. Next, it outlines the attributes of a coercive military strategy, according to Stephen Cimbala, in order to provide an understanding of the complexity of military coercion. Understanding these concepts is important for the following chapter where this thesis uses game theory to explain why the United States’ coercive military strategy was unlikely to succeed prior to September 11, 2001, and why the United States’ new military strategy is capable of ending, or at least reducing, state-sponsored terrorism.

### B. COERCIVE DIPLOMACY

The general intent of coercive diplomacy is to back a demand on an adversary with a threat of punishment for noncompliance that will be credible and potent enough to persuade the opponent their best interest lies in compliance with the demand. Coercive diplomacy is a diplomatic strategy that relies on the threat of force rather than the use of

force to achieve the objective. If force must be used to strengthen diplomatic efforts at persuasion, it is employed in “an exemplary manner,” in the form of limited military action, to demonstrate resolution and willingness to escalate to higher levels of military action if necessary (George 1, 1994, p. 2).

Coercive diplomacy is a strategy implemented to challenge the efforts of an adversary to change a status quo situation in his own favor. Figure 4-1 depicts three different objectives coercive diplomacy can pursue: 1) persuade the opponent to stop short of the goal (Type A); 2) persuade the opponent to undo the course of action (Type B); 3) persuade the opponent to make changes in government (Type C) (p. 8). Alexander George states that Type C is the most difficult variant of coercive diplomacy because “this type of demand stretches coercive diplomacy to its outer limits since it may blur the distinction between defensive and offensive use of threats” (George 2, 1994, p. 8). The more ambitious the demand of the opponent, the more difficult coercive diplomacy becomes.

<u>COERCIVE DIPLOMACY</u>			
<u>Deterrence</u>	<u>Type A</u>	<u>Type B</u>	<u>Type C</u>
Persuade opponent not to initiate an action	Persuade opponent to stop short of the goal	Persuade opponent to undo the action	Persuade opponent to make changes in government

Table 4. Types of Coercive Diplomacy  
(From George 2, 1994, p. 9)

Coercive diplomacy calls for using just enough force of “an appropriate kind” to demonstrate one’s resolve in protecting well-defined interests, as well as, the display of credibility and determination to use more force if necessary. It is important to note that both the threat and employment of the threat should be coupled with appropriate communication to the opponent. Furthermore, if force is used, it should not be part of a conventional military strategy for resolving a conflict of interest. As George emphasizes, the purpose of an exemplary use of force in coercive diplomacy is to convey a

willingness to do more, if necessary, to persuade an adversary to stop or undo his course of action. The “offended state” must make clear whether its action is a reprisal or an exemplary component of coercive diplomacy (George 2, 1994, p. 11).

Coercive diplomacy rests upon the assumption of a “rational” opponent. Coercive diplomacy assumes the adversary will be receptive to and will correctly evaluate information critical to the question of whether the costs and risks of not complying outweigh the gains expected from pursuing the course of action (George 3, 1994, p. 13). It is also important to remember that the strategy rests heavily on the correctness of the policymaker’s assessment of the opponent’s perceptions and reasoning. As George and Simons (1994) state,

Whether leaders of the coercing power have a correct image of their opponent is a significant determinant of the reasonableness of their choice of a variant of coercive diplomacy for use in a specific crisis. This can also have a major impact on the success or failure of that strategy. The prospects for success in the choice and implementation of coercive diplomacy are greatly enhanced if the policymaker can view the crisis event and his own crisis behavior from the perspective of the opponent (p. 288).

Faulty “images” of the adversary can lead to ineffective policy choices. Therefore, gathering accurate information on an adversary and establishing a policymaking environment where information can be considered objectively is perhaps the most useful preparation an administration can make for the potential use of coercive diplomacy (p. 291).

### **C. MILITARY COERCION**

The problem in coercion, according to Robert Pape (1996), is “to persuade the target state that acceding to the coercer’s demands will be better than resisting them” (p. 15). Success or failure, therefore, depends on a cost-benefit analysis. As Pape states, “Success or failure is decided by the target state’s decision calculus with regard to costs and benefits . . . When the benefits by continued resistance are exceeded by the costs of resistance and the probability of suffering these costs, the target concedes” (p. 16). The logic of coercion is described by the equation in Table 5.

$$R = B * p(B) - C * p(C)$$

where: R = value of resistance

B = potential benefit of resistance

p(B) = probability of attaining benefits by continued resistance

C = potential cost of resistance

p(C) = probability of suffering costs

Concessions occur when R<0.

Table 5. Logic of Coercion

(From Pape, 1996, p. 16)

Although Pape's coercion discussion revolves around coercion in war, the concepts he presents in the above equation are relevant to understanding the role military force plays in the United States' coercive diplomatic effort against state-sponsored terrorism. For the U.S. coercive diplomatic effort to be successful, it must ensure the target state views the threat of U.S. military action as credible; understanding that the benefits of continuing to sponsor terrorism will not exceed the costs of the United States' reaction. If military force must be used to strengthen diplomatic efforts at persuasion, it must be in a form which demonstrates resolution and a willingness to escalate to higher levels of military action, ensuring the costs of continuing to sponsor terrorism exceed the benefits. Coercion, therefore, can only succeed when the costs of compliance are lower than the cost of resistance.

According to Stephen Cimbala, “a coercive military strategy is one that explicitly seeks to employ deliberately calculated means [threats and actual use of force] in order to accomplish policy objectives, while adjusting its ends and means relationship to the evolving situation” (p. 4). As a result, a coercive military strategy has the following attributes.

### **1. Influencing the Will**

The primary objective of a coercive military strategy is influencing the opponent's will. If the threat of military force is not credible, then the strategy must use “carefully calibrated, but not necessarily small amounts of destruction,” in order to change the opponent's calculus about its potential costs if it continues on the present,

undesired path. Implicit in this attribute is the willingness to sometimes settle for less than total victory, and perhaps, less than one's original war aim (Cimbala, 1998, pp. 162-164).

## **2. Openness to Revision**

This attribute requires an openness to revising one's own initial political or military objective without necessarily conceding to the opponent's objective. During a crisis, each side has its own definition of what gains and losses are relative to their own objectives. When these definitions "prove false," states must revise their objectives by becoming more or less ambitious (Cimbala, 1998, p. 164).

## **3. Perspective Taking**

Whether the strategy will work in any particular situation rests heavily on the correctness of the policymaker's assessment of the opponent's perceptions and strategy reasoning. (George & Simons, 1994, p. 288). In order to be successful, states must have the ability and willingness to see into the other side's objectives and motives and appreciate their sources. This however, does not necessarily imply the state agree with, or have sympathy for, those motives. It only implies that the coercer understand the opponent's motive (Cimbala, 1998, p. 165). As George and Simons state,

Whether leaders of the coercing power have a correct image of their opponent is a significant determinant of the reasonableness of their choice of a variant . . . in a specific crisis. This can also have a major impact on the success or failure of that strategy. The prospects for success in the choice and the implementation . . . are greatly enhanced if a policymaker can view the crisis events and his own crisis behavior from the perspective of the opponent" (p. 288).

Faulty images of the opponent can lead to ineffective choices, as well as, other miscalculations.

## **4. Symbolic Manipulation**

It is important that a state be able to successfully manipulate the symbols and information in support of its own political and military objectives: the coercer must manage the perception of the crisis. Perception management includes manipulating any statements, discussions, and actions taken by an opponent in order to influence the opponent's assumptions about the coercer's intentions and capabilities. As Cimbala

(1998) states, “Because reality is often what people think it is, changing perception of reality can, under the right conditions, be tantamount to changing the ‘objective’ . . .” (p. 166).

### **5. Moral Influence**

Moral influence is perhaps the most important aspect of a coercive military strategy. Popular support for war aims, and the methods used to make war, must be accepted and supported by the population, government, and especially the military. First, the population must feel that war is justified. Second, the armed forces must not be demoralized by misuse or permitted to be torn apart by “political factionalism.” Finally, military members must feel that, consistent with military discipline and tradition, they are treated with dignity and respect (Cimbala, 1998, p. 168). As Sun Tzu states; “that which causes the people to be in harmony with their leaders, so that they will accompany them in life and unto death without fear of mortal peril” (as cited in Cimbala, 1998, p. 168).

### **D. SUMMARY**

The use of military force is but one component of coercive diplomacy; it is, however, the component upon which coercion is built. Coercion occurs whenever a state must choose between making concession—reversing a course of action—or suffering the consequences of continuing its present course of action. Coercive diplomacy is a diplomatic strategy that relies on the threat of force, rather than the use of force, to achieve the objective. If force must be used to strengthen diplomatic efforts at persuasion, it is employed in “an exemplary manner” and of “an appropriate kind” to demonstrate one’s resolve to protect well-defined interests, as well as, the credibility of one’s resolution and willingness to escalate to higher levels of military action if necessary.

Understanding Stephen Cimbala’s attributes of a coercive military strategy is imperative if a state decides to undertake a coercive strategy against an opponent. If the threat of the use of military force is not credible, and policymakers decided actual force must be used to strengthen diplomatic efforts at persuasion, the coercer is most likely going to be unsuccessful at achieving its objective. To be successful, the coercer must undermine the target state’s confidence in its own strategy. The coercer must impress upon the target that the levels of costs considered bearable while the chance of success

exists, become intolerable once a state is persuaded it cannot achieve its objectives. Accomplishing this requires a credible military threat.

Comparing the ideas presented in this chapter with the information presented in the case studies of operations El Dorado Canyon and Infinite Reach, produces a realization that the pursuit of these strategies would fail in forcing the target states to cease their support for terrorism. In both cases, it appears that U.S. policymakers failed to fully employ the five attributes of a coercive military strategy as presented in this chapter. Furthermore, it appears that the use of force in these operations did nothing to create a credible military threat: a threat necessary for coercive diplomacy to be effective in dealing with state sponsors in the future.

The following chapter uses game theory to provide a more detailed understanding of how the failure to adhere to the ideas presented in this chapter led to the failure of coercive military strategies in dealing with state-sponsored terrorism prior to September 11, 2001. It also demonstrates how adhering to these points, post 9-11, provides the U.S. with a coercive military strategy capable of meeting the U.S. objective of forcing states to cease their support for terrorist organizations.

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## **V. ANALYZING U.S. MILITARY COERCIVE STRATEGIES USING GAME THEORY**

### **A. INTRODUCTION**

Using game theory, this chapter examines the U.S. military strategy in dealing with state-sponsored terrorism before September 11, 2001. In the process, this thesis analyzes why states continued to sponsor terrorism even though it was evident the U.S. showed a willingness to respond militarily. Following this analysis, the chapter examines the post 9-11 environment to develop an understanding of why the U.S. now has the ability to use military force to effectively coerce states into curtailing their sponsorship of terrorist organizations. The use of assumptions is implicit in this analysis. These assumptions are built upon the information presented throughout this thesis, as well as, from additional information obtained from the sources used to develop this thesis.

### **B. PRE 9-11**

Due to the lack of emphasis on offensive military counterterrorism missions, the U.S. military played a limited role in counterterrorism policy during the 1980s and 1990s. As previously stated, the military was called upon only three times during those 20 years to conduct offensive military operations. The use of military force in each of these operations used was limited in both breadth and scope. The military actions relied on limited strikes by aircraft and cruise missiles.

Although U.S. leaders explained that the purpose of each military operation was to send a message that the U.S. would not tolerate terrorist attacks, not once did the U.S. show its willingness or resolve to escalate to higher levels of military action. This unwillingness appears to be the result of a failure of U.S. policymakers to view state sponsors as posing a “grave” threat to U.S. national security. Therefore, policymakers were not willing to expend large amounts of military resources on combating state sponsors; nor were they willing to risk the lives of American servicemen in an attempt to force state sponsors to curtail their support of terrorism. This, in turn, resulted in the U.S. failing to establish the credible military threat necessary for its coercive diplomatic and military strategies to be effective.

In addition, American military leaders focused on conflict as a win-lose situation. They did not see conflict, particularly conflict with state sponsors of terrorism, as a partial conflict in which the sum of the payoffs to the players at the different outcomes varies. As Cimbala (1998) states,

American military leaders, because of a fixation on “victory” and “winning wars,” have too often viewed conflict as a zero sum game in which a gain for one side results in a corresponding loss by the other and thus have frequently failed to provide the kind of politico-military advice a crisis situation requires . . . Rather than thinking in terms of a variety of conflict management techniques . . . too many military leaders continue to focus on conflict as a contest to be “won” rather than an international malady that requires flexible and imaginative management (p.182).

As a result, terrorist attacks against the United States continued, the most recent, and the most devastating by far, occurring on September 11, 2001.

### **1. Assumptions**

As a result of U.S. policy and the limited punishment strikes taken against state sponsors of terrorism prior to 9-11, the following assumptions are made in order to develop the matrix required to understand the outcomes of the partial conflict game between the U.S. and state sponsors of terrorism:

- a. State sponsors do not pose a “grave” threat to U.S. national security
- b. States sponsor terrorism in order to pursue national objectives
- c. State sponsors are willing to accept a degree of damage and loss of life in return for continued terrorist support/actions
- d. U.S. wants to end terrorism – U.S. national objective
- e. U.S. is not willing to fully commit U.S. forces
  - (1) not willing to engage in full scale war
  - (2) only willing to use limited military attacks that minimize risk to U.S. forces (e.g. cruise missile attacks/air strikes)
- f. U.S. public demands action
- g. U.S. diplomatic and economic sanctions in place; legal actions taken; United Nations sanctions may or may not be in place
- h. Current U.S. economic, diplomatic, and legal strategies have not produced desired results
- i. U.S. policy – no concessions to terrorists or organizations/states that support or harbor terrorists (little to no communication between the two players)

## 2. The Game

The question to be analyzed: Is military force a viable strategic option for coercing states to stop sponsoring terrorism?

### a. *United States Options*

On a scale of 4-to-1, with 4 being the best option and 1 being the worst option, this thesis assumes the rankings depicted in Table 6 for a U.S. objective of coercing a given state to stop sponsoring terrorism.

<b>United States' Options</b>	
<b>4</b>	Best Choice – State stops sponsoring terrorism, military force not required
<b>3</b>	Next Best Choice – State stops sponsoring terrorism, military force used
<b>2</b>	Next Choice – State continues sponsoring terrorism, military force used
	a. U.S. able to punish enemy for terrorist acts committed; use of cruise missiles and airstrikes limit U.S. casualties
	b. U.S. does not look weak by taking no action at all
	c. helps with public support
<b>1</b>	Worst Option – State continues sponsoring terrorism, U.S. does nothing militarily

Table 6. U.S. Ranking of Options, Pre 9-11

It is difficult to determine the actual utility of each of these rankings for the U.S. without interviewing top U.S. policymakers. Therefore, this thesis assumes that the ordinal utility of these rankings equals the cardinal utility; that is, four is two times as good as two, three is three times as good as one, etc. Making this assumption is necessary in order to illustrate Nash arbitration. The utility scale in Figure 2 depicts this assumption.

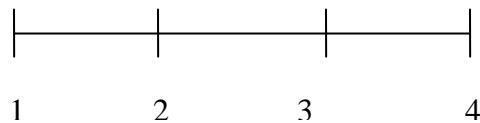


Figure 2. U.S. Utility Scale, Pre 9-11

*b. State Sponsor Options*

On a scale of 4-to-1, with 4 being the best option and 1 being the worst option, this thesis assumes the rankings depicted in Table 7 for a state sponsor's objective of continuing to use terrorism to further the state's objectives.

<b>State Sponsor's Options</b>	
<b>4</b>	Best Choice – U.S. does nothing, continue sponsoring terrorism
<b>3</b>	Next Best Choice – U.S. strikes militarily, continue sponsoring terrorism
	a. will sustain some damage and loss of life
	b. know strikes are limited and will not be sustained
<b>2</b>	Next Choice – U.S. does not strike militarily, stop sponsoring terrorism
	a. no collateral damage or loss of life
	b. regime stays in power
<b>1</b>	Worst Choice – U.S. strikes militarily, stop sponsoring terrorism
	a. reason for stopping most likely due to severe damage to infrastructure and loss of life
	b. U.S. has denied state the ability to continue sponsoring terrorism
	c. may result in loss of regime's hold on power

Table 7. State Sponsor Ranking of Options, Pre 9-11

Again, it is difficult to determine the actual utility of each of these rankings for the U.S. without interviewing the policymakers of the states sponsoring terrorism. Therefore, this thesis once again assumes that the ordinal utility of these rankings equals the cardinal utility; that is, four is two times as good as two, three is three times as good as one, etc. Making this assumption is necessary in order to illustrate Nash arbitration. The utility scale in Figure 3 depicts this assumption.

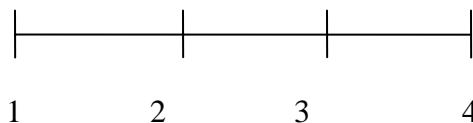


Figure 3. State Sponsor Utility Scale, Pre 9-11

*c. U.S. vs. State Sponsor*

Based on the above assumptions and rankings of desired outcomes, a game develops with a matrix as shown in Figure 4 and Figure 5.

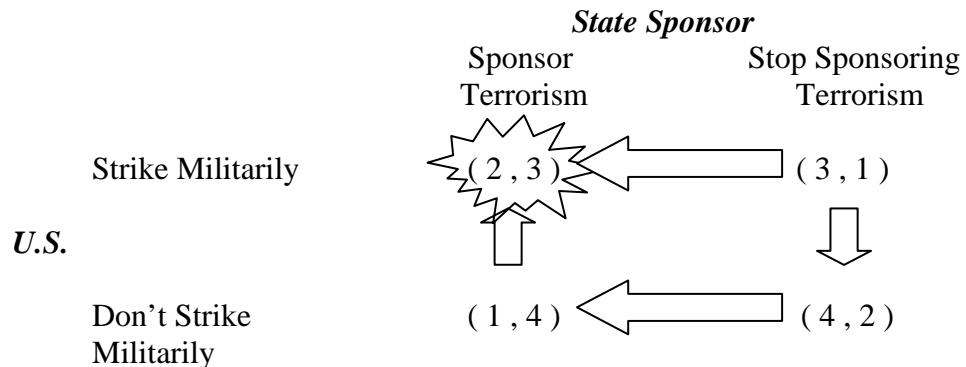


Figure 4. U.S. vs. State Sponsor, Pre 9-11

As a result of the expected payoffs, it is determined that a Nash Equilibrium exists at (2, 3) – U.S. strike militarily, state continues sponsoring terrorism. A Nash equilibrium is a point at which no player can benefit by departing unilaterally (by itself) from its strategy associated with an outcome.

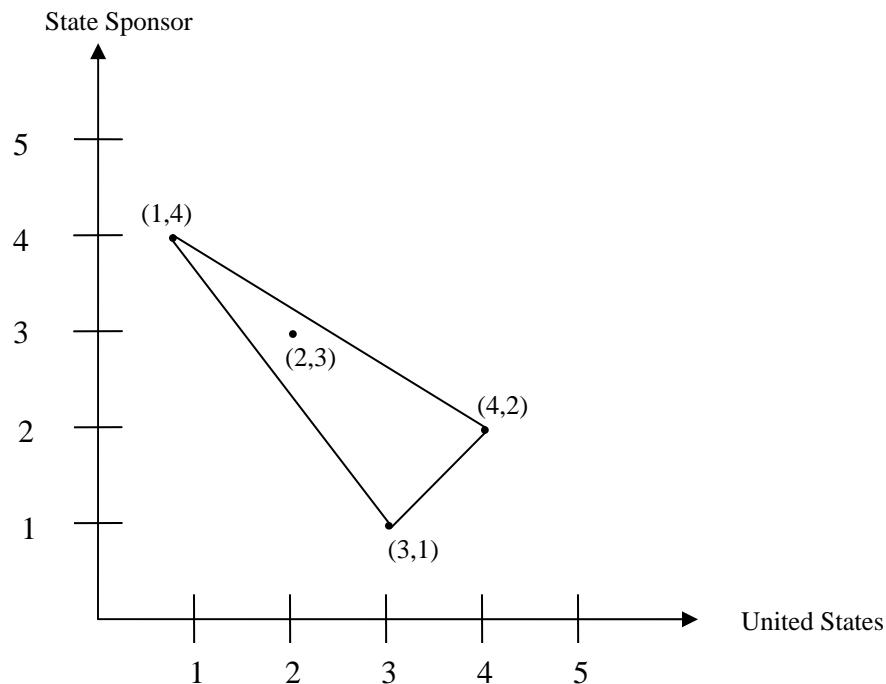


Figure 5. U.S. vs. State Sponsor, Pre 9-11

Having determined that neither the U.S., nor the state sponsor, can benefit by unilaterally departing from its associate strategy, and that the U.S. cannot threaten or promise the state sponsor, it becomes important to analyze each player's game to determine if there is the possibility of improving an outcome by playing one side's game. Figures 6 and 7 show the results of both the state sponsor's and the United States' games. In each game, the objective is for the player whose game is being analyzed to maximize its outcome while the opponent attempts to minimize the other player's outcome. The result determines a security value for each player.

*d. State Sponsor's Game*

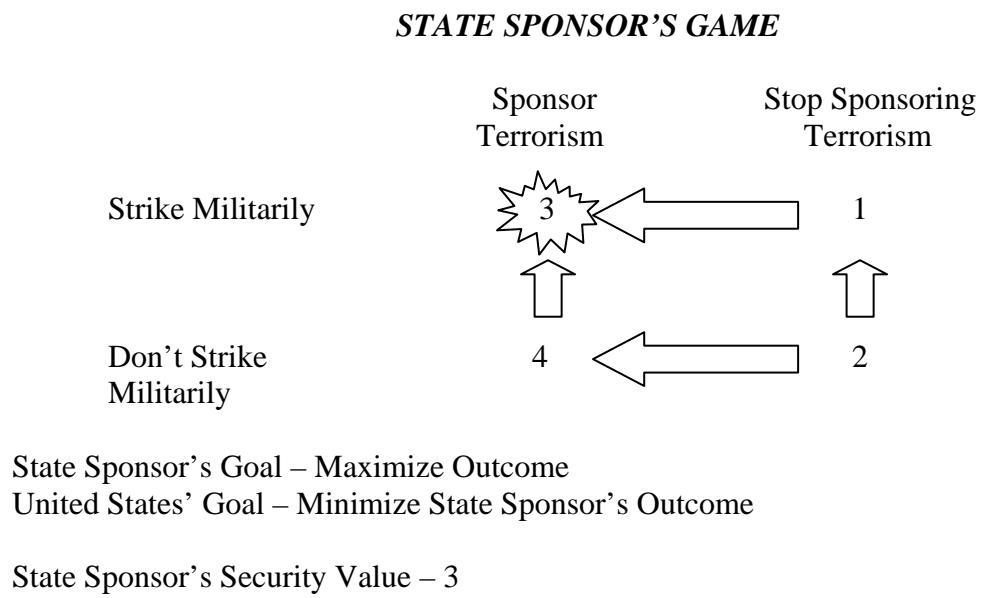


Figure 6. Inside the State Sponsor's Game, Pre 9-11

e. *United States' Game*

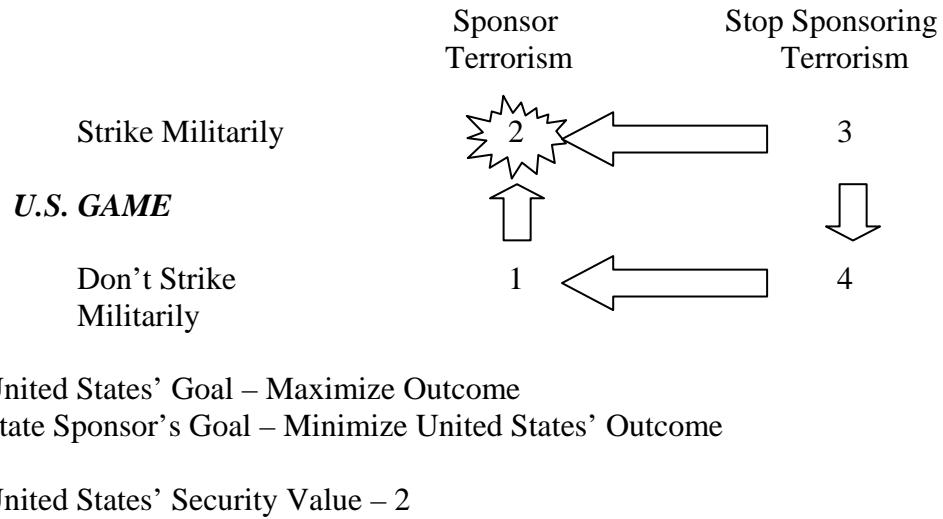


Figure 7. Inside the United State's Game, Pre 9-11

f. *Status Quo and Negotiation Set*

As Figure 8 indicates, the Nash Equilibrium of ( 2 , 3 ) corresponding to the status quo (SQ), the intersection of the two players' security levels, results in a negotiation set which allows very little room for Nash arbitration. Therefore, the result remains: State sponsor terrorism, United States strike militarily.

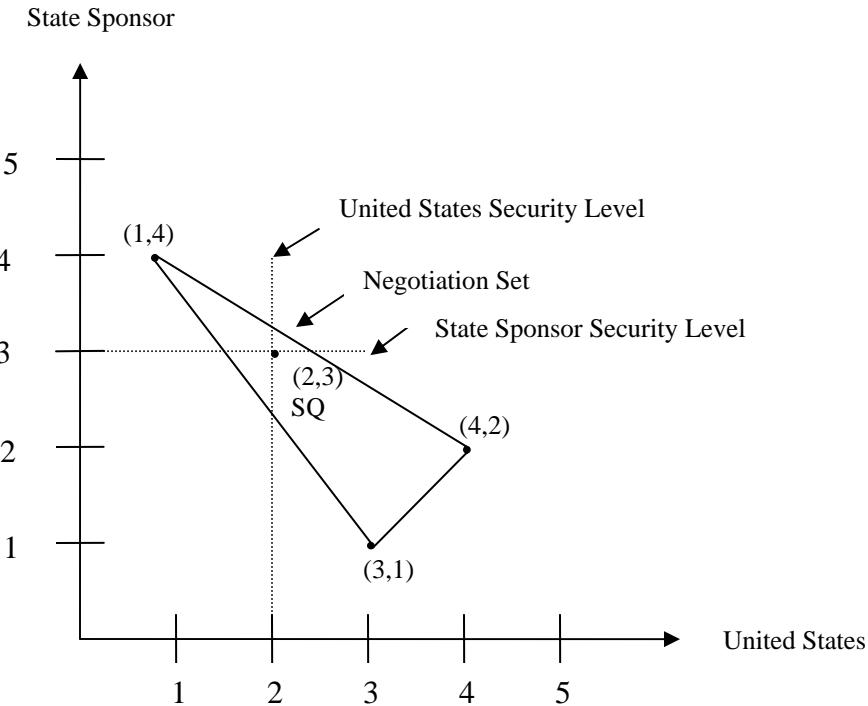


Figure 8. Status Quo and the Negotiation Set, Pre 9-11

### 3. Pre 9-11 Summary

Prior to 9-11, the United States was not willing to fully commit military force in order to bring an end to state sponsored terrorism. As Tim Zimmerman (1994) states, “. . . throughout the postwar [World War II] era, the U.S. military establishment has been consistently wary of policies that require easy or frequent resort to force, particularly if the use of force must be very specific and limited according to ‘political’ criteria.”

As a result, U.S. leadership relied on a strategy of launching limited strikes in the hope they would send the message that the U.S. was serious in dealing with state sponsors of terrorism. The lack of commitment, however, showed the U.S. strategy as lacking credibility when it came to the actual use of force. As a result, state sponsors were willing to accept limited damage in order to continue sponsoring terrorism as a way to project their strategic interests.

### C. POST 9-11

Following the U.S.S. COLE attack, U.S. policymakers began realizing that past military responses to state-sponsored terrorist attacks were not achieving the desired effect. Policymakers realized the need to develop a new strategy that would make the

military instrument of national power more effective at coercing state sponsors to cease their support of terrorists and terrorist organizations. It was a strategy, however, that was not implemented until after the events that occurred on September 11, 2001.

These events changed the focus of U.S. national security policy. For the first time since World War II, the United States was “hit on its home turf.” The devastation in New York, Washington D.C., and Pennsylvania demanded the United States take action to defeat terrorists and terrorist organizations. The resulting National Security Strategy of the United States (2002) states, “We will disrupt and destroy terrorist organizations by . . . denying further sponsorship, support, and sanctuary to terrorists by convincing or compelling states to accept their sovereign responsibilities.” Key in this strategy is the termination of safehavens, funds, weapons, and other types of support state sponsors provide terrorist organizations. As Douglas Feith (2004), Under Secretary of Defense for Policy stated, “We cannot win the war on terrorism if we do not cut off state support for terrorist organizations.”

Following the attacks of September 11, 2001, President Bush broke the U.S. government’s practice of responding to terrorist attacks by looking for individuals to arrest, extradite, and prosecute in criminal courts. President Bush decided that 9-11 meant that the U.S. was at war and, as a result, responded with U.S. armed forces in addition to the other instruments of national power (Feith, 2004). Within months of the 9-11 attacks, the United States invaded Afghanistan, a key supporter of al-Qaeda and Usama bin Laden. Just over a year later, the United States invaded Iraq which has been on the U.S. State Department list of state sponsors of terrorism since 1990 (initially placed on the list in 1979, but lifted in 1982). As a result of these military actions, the U.S. presented a credible threat to state sponsors of terrorism.

### **1. Assumptions**

The following assumptions are based on information presented in The National Security Strategy of the United States of America (2002), actions taken by the United States and state sponsors of terrorism following 9-11, and results seen to date in the current war on terrorism:

- a. States sponsoring terrorism pose a “grave” threat to U.S. national security
- b. State sponsor terrorism in order to pursue national objectives

- c. State sponsor is unwilling to accept substantial losses
- d. State sponsor's military cannot challenge/defeat U.S. forces
- e. State sponsor's allies unwilling to join conventional fight
- f. U.S. committed to ending terrorism – U.S. national objective
- g. U.S. willing to commit U.S. military forces – U.S. willing to engage in large scale military operations
- h. U.S. public demands action
- i. U.S. diplomatic and economic sanctions in place; legal actions taken; United Nations sanctions may or may not be in place
- j. Current U.S. economic, diplomatic, and legal strategies have not produced desired results
- k. U.S. willing to communicate with state sponsors in order to end terrorism

## **2. The Game**

As in the pre 9-11 analysis, the question remains: Is military force a viable strategic option for coercing states to stop sponsoring terrorism?

### ***a. United States Options***

On a scale of 4-to-1, with 4 being the best option and 1 being the worst option, this thesis assumes the rankings depicted in Table 8 for a U.S. objective of coercing a given state to stop sponsoring terrorism.

### United States' Options

- 4** Best Choice – State stops sponsoring terrorism, military force not required
- 3** Next Best Choice – State stops sponsoring terrorism, military force used
- 2** Next Choice – State continues sponsoring terrorism, no military force used: U.S. wants to avoid the loss of significant American lives in operations, against states, that will not achieve U.S. national objectives
- 1** Worst Option – State continues sponsoring terrorism, U.S. military force used
  - a. large scale operations costly to U.S. in terms of lives and dollars
  - b. American citizens will protest large military operations that do not achieve desired results

Table 8. United States Ranking of Options, Post 9-11

As in the pre 9-11 game, it is difficult to determine the actual utility of each of the rankings for the U.S. without interviewing U.S. policymakers. Therefore, this thesis assumes that the ordinal utility of these rankings equals the cardinal utility; that is, four is two times as good as two, three is three times as good as one, etc. Making this assumption is necessary in order to illustrate Nash arbitration. The utility scale in Figure 9 depicts this assumption.



Figure 9. U.S. Utility Scale, Post 9-11

#### *b. State Sponsor Options*

On a scale of 4-to-1, with 4 being the best option and 1 being the worst option, this thesis assumes the rankings depicted in Table 9 for a state sponsor's objective of continuing to use terrorism to further the state's objectives.

### State Sponsor Options

- 4** Best Choice – U.S. does not strike militarily, continue sponsoring terrorism
- 3** Next Best Choice – U.S. does not strike militarily, stop sponsoring terrorism
  - a. no loss of life
  - b. no large scale destruction to infrastructure
  - c. regime stays in power
- 2** Next Choice – U.S. strikes militarily, continue sponsoring terrorism
  - a. probability of large scale destruction and loss of life
  - b. the state still gains something
- 1** Worst Choice – U.S. strikes militarily, stop sponsoring terrorism
  - a. large scale destruction and loss of life
  - b. regime likely to be replaced
  - c. state does not gain anything

Table 9. State Sponsor Ranking of Options, Post 9-11

Again, it is difficult to determine the actual utility of each of these rankings for the state without interviewing the policymakers of the states sponsoring terrorism. Therefore, this thesis once again assumes that the ordinal utility of these rankings equals the cardinal utility; that is, four is two times as good as two, three is three times as good as one, etc. Making this assumption is necessary in order to illustrate Nash arbitration. The utility scale in Figure 10 depicts this assumption.

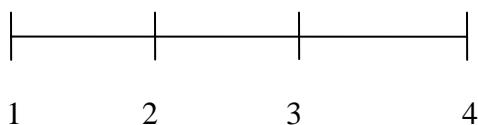


Figure 10. State Sponsor Utility Scale, Post 9-11

*c. U.S. vs. State Sponsor*

Based on the above assumptions and rankings of desired outcomes, a game develops with a matrix as shown in Figure 11 and Figure 12.

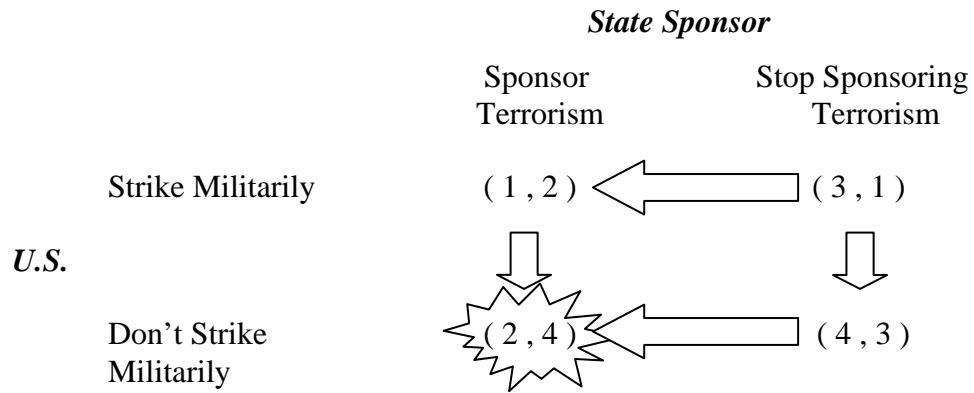


Figure 11. The U.S. vs. State Sponsor, Post 9-11

As a result of the expected payoffs, it can be determined that a Nash Equilibrium exists at ( 2 , 4 ) – U.S. does not strike militarily, state continues sponsoring terrorism.

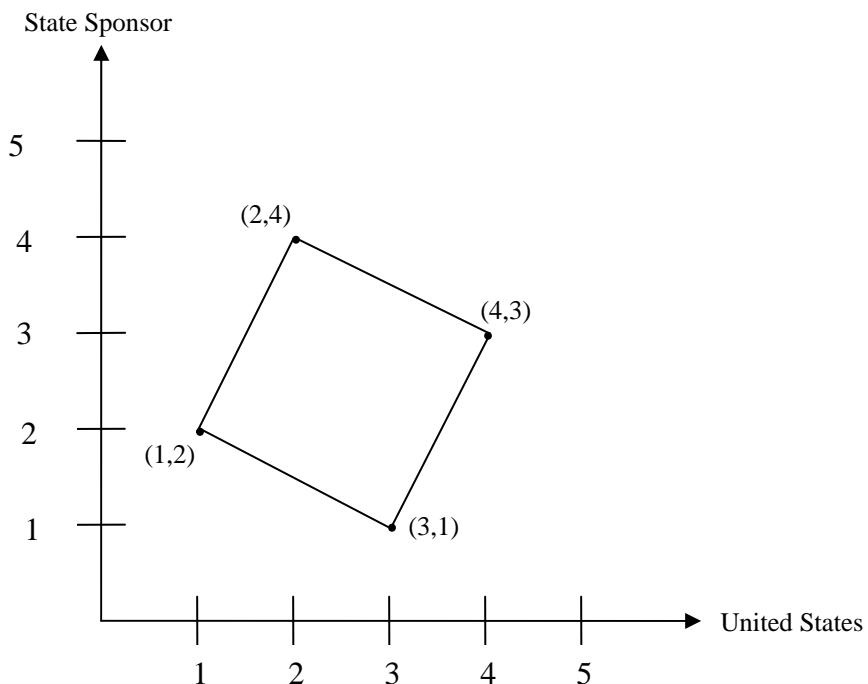


Figure 12. U.S. vs. State Sponsor, Post 9-11

Having determined that neither the U.S. nor the state sponsor can benefit by unilaterally departing from its associate strategy, it once again becomes necessary to determine whether the United States can threaten and/or promise the state sponsor (as depicted in Figure 13).

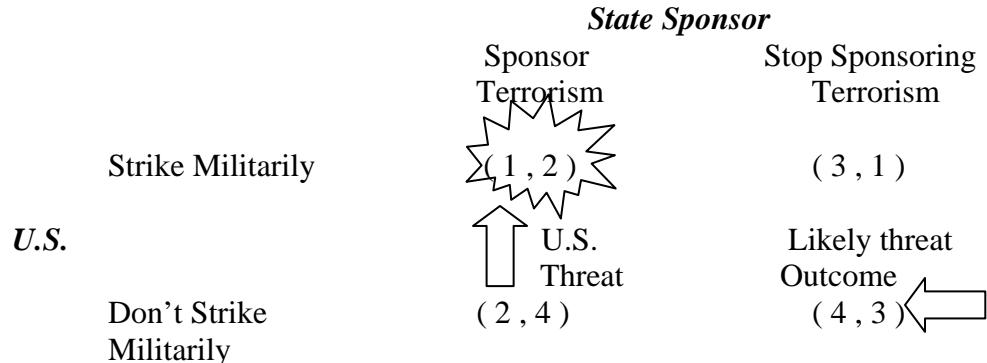


Figure 13. United States' Military Threat

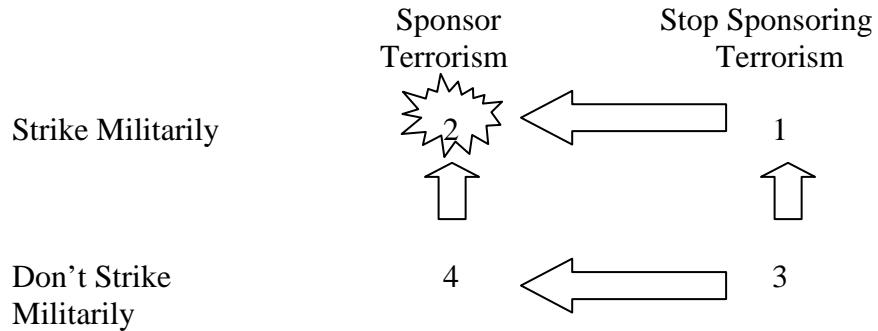
Figure 13 displays the United States in an excellent position to threaten the state sponsor. If the state chooses to sponsor terrorism, the United States will respond by striking militarily. Although this will cause the United States to drop the value of its game from a 2-to-a-1, it will also force the state sponsor to fall from a 4-to-a-2.

Since the U.S. is capable of presenting a credible threat, it is likely the state sponsor will rethink its game plan and choose to stop sponsoring terrorism in order to gain the higher outcome of 3 by the United States not striking militarily. To make this option even more attractive, the United States could add some incentives. This may entail something such as ending all economic sanctions and reestablishing diplomatic ties with the country once it renounces terrorism and ceases its support of terrorist organizations.

In order to determine the actual outcome of the game, it is important for each player to analyze the individual player games. Figures 14 and 15 show the results of both the state sponsor's and the United States' games. In each game, the objective is for the player whose game is being analyzed to maximize his outcome while the opponent attempts to minimize the other player's outcome. The result is the security value for each player.

*d. State Sponsor's Game*

**STATE SPONSOR'S GAME**

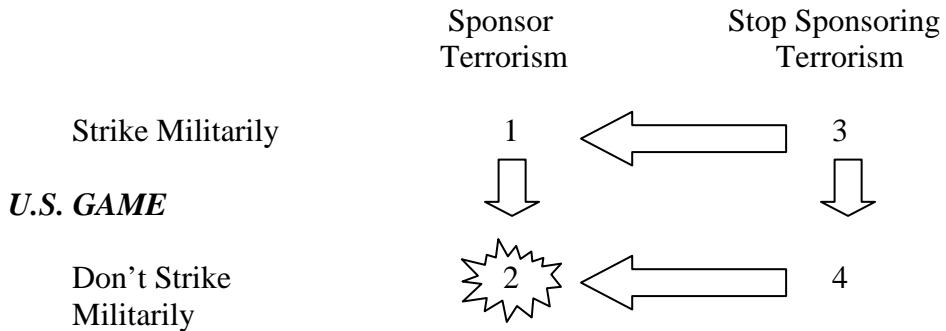


State Sponsor's Goal – Maximize Outcome  
 United States' Goal – Minimize State Sponsor's Outcome

State Sponsor's Security Value – 2

Figure 14. Inside the State Sponsor's Game, Post 9-11

*e. United States' Game*



United States' Goal – Maximize Outcome  
 State Sponsor's Goal – Minimize United States' Outcome

United States' Security Value – 2

Figure 15. Inside the United States' Game, Post 9-11

### *f. Status Quo and Negotiation Set*

The results of playing zero-sum games for both the U.S. and the state sponsor show the status quo of  $(2, 2)$  as depicted in Figure 16. However, since the state sponsor cannot improve its position of a 2, but the United States can improve its threat position from a 1-to-a-2 by playing these zero-sum games, the state sponsor is most likely to view the threat position of  $(2, 1)$  as the status quo and use this position, rather than the security level position of  $(2, 2)$ , as the position from which to conduct Nash arbitration.

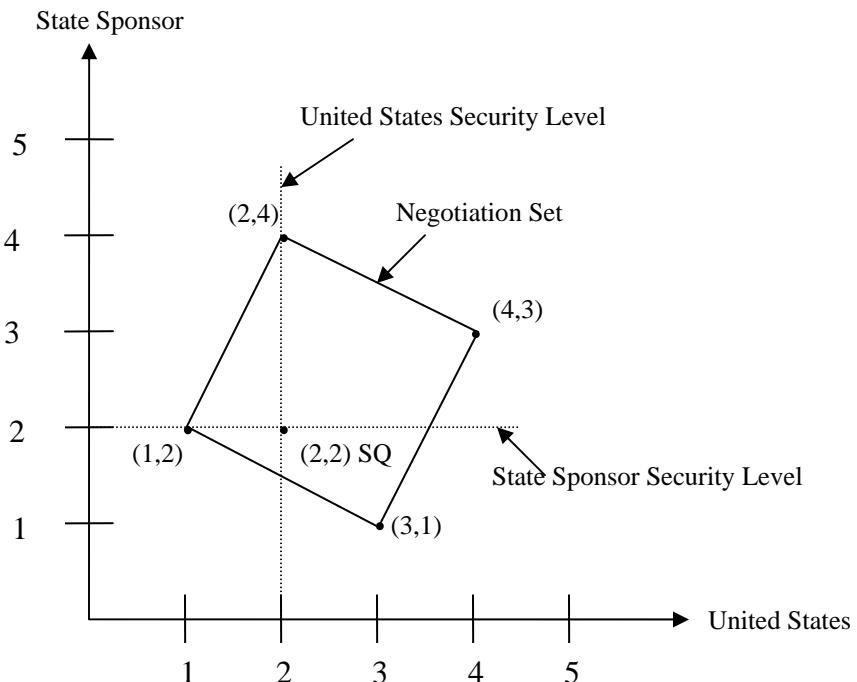


Figure 16. Status Quo and the Negotiation Set, Post 9-11

### *g. Nash Arbitration*

With this said, there is still room for the players to improve their positions. The line intersecting the points  $(2, 4)$  and  $(4, 3)$  is the pareto optimal line, illustrating the negotiation set. This illustrates that there is the possibility of an outcome which gives both players higher payoffs, or would give one player the same payoff but the other player a higher payoff. From this point either the United States and/or the state sponsor

can improve its position. Conducting arbitration from a status quo of ( 2 , 1 ), allows the players to maximize their utility gains as depicted in Figure 17.

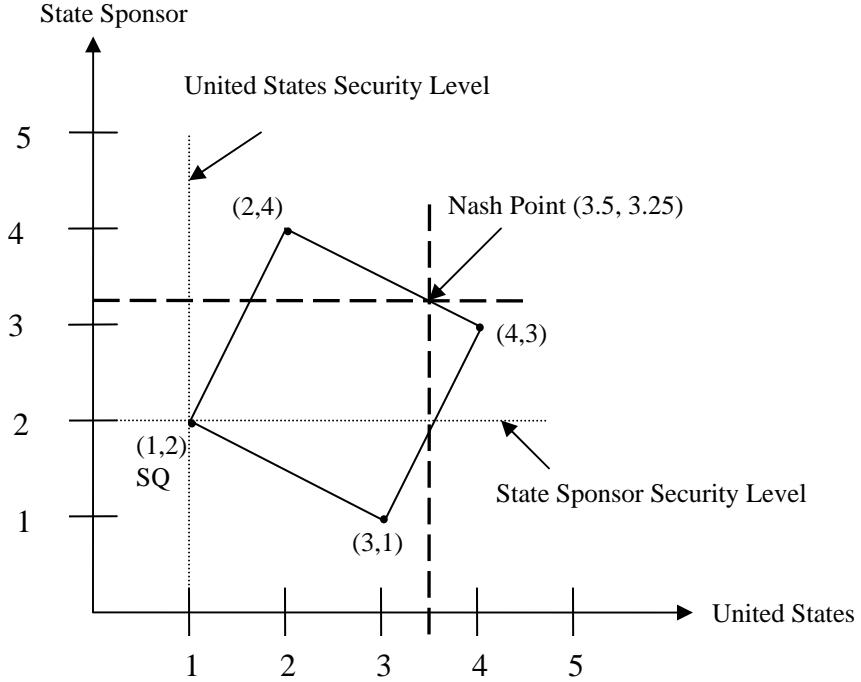


Figure 17. Results of Nash Arbitration

The result of a credible threat from the United States forces the players into arbitration with an end result of ( 3.5 , 3.25 ). This means that by presenting a credible threat, the United States can force the state to abandon its support of terrorism, thereby accepting a lower outcome than the Nash equilibrium. However, the United States must also be willing to give something up as a side payment. As previously stated, this may entail something such as ending all economic sanctions and reestablishing diplomatic ties with the country once they renounce terrorism and cease all support of terrorist organizations.

### 3. Post 9-11 Summary

Although the war on terror is relatively new, important results have been attained, in addition to the changes seen in Afghanistan and Iraq, by the credible military threat now possessed by the United States. For example, prior to September 11, 2001 military force was an ineffective instrument of the United States coercive diplomatic effort against

Libya. Economic sanctions and diplomatic pressures were taking their toll on Libya, forcing Qadhafi to take steps to disassociate Libya with terrorism, yet Libya still failed to fully comply with U.S. and international demands to completely abandon its support of terrorism and to willingly dismantle its weapons of mass destruction program. As a result, Libya remained on the U.S. State Department list of state sponsors of terrorism.

In his speech on September 1, 2002, less than one year after the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan, Qadhafi declared that Libya would combat members of al-Qaeda and “heretics” as doggedly as the United States. He further claimed that all political prisoners would be released and that the Libyan Government would henceforth only hold members of al-Qaeda (Patterns of Global Terrorism, 2003, p. 80). Furthermore, Libya took responsibility for the Pan Am 103 bombing and promised to verifiably dismantle its weapons of mass destruction program (King, 2004). Although the United States had sanctions on Libya for over 30 years, the results of the U.S. invasions of Afghanistan accelerated Libya’s compliance with U.S. and international demands. The credible military threat projected by the U.S. strengthened the United States’ coercive diplomatic effort against Libya, forcing it to accept its responsibilities, end its sponsorship of terrorism, and dismantle its weapons of mass destruction program sooner than may otherwise have occurred.

These results, however, are only one half of the equation. As discussed earlier, for Nash arbitration to be successful, the United States had to give some sort of side payment in return. Following the steps taken by Qadhafi, President Bush reciprocated by stating, “As Libya takes tangible steps to address those concerns, the United States will take reciprocal tangible steps to recognize Libya’s progress” (as cited in King, 2004). As a result, after 23 years, the United States lifted a long-standing ban on travel to Libya, inviting American companies to begin planning their return. The U.S. administration also encouraged Libya to establish an official presence in Washington by opening an “interests section,” a diplomatic level beneath an embassy. The United States is also expanding its diplomatic presence in Tripoli (Hunt, 2004, p. A7).

Although U.S. sanctions, as well as diplomatic and legal pressures, were taking their tolls on Libya over the past 30 years, these steps were unable to bring about the desired end state in a quick and effective manner necessary in the post 9-11 environment.

Since the establishment of a credible U.S. military threat after 9-11, as a result of the new military strategy employed by the United States, the nature of the game has changed, giving the U.S. the ability to reach the desired end state at an accelerated pace.

#### **D. SUMMARY**

As the game theory results in this thesis show, military force prior to September 11, 2001 was ineffective at coercing state sponsors of terrorism to abandon their support. The limited military strategy employed by the United States, combined with the state's willingness to accept the damage and loss of life caused by these limited strikes, lead to an outcome from which neither player could improve their position. Not until September 11, 2001 did the United States produce a coercive military capability that changed the way the game is played.

Following these terrorist attacks, the United States embarked upon a military strategy which created a credible threat. As a result of the United States' willingness to use the full degree of its military force when required, and the credible threat this strategy represents, this thesis summarizes that the desired outcomes and the utility of those outcomes has changed to a point where military force now plays a significant role in the United States' coercive strategy against state sponsors of terrorism. As a result, the United States and the state sponsor can now reach a desired outcome through arbitration that is acceptable to both sides, allowing the United States to attain its objective of forcing states to stop sponsoring terrorism.

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## VI. CONCLUSION

### A. INTRODUCTION

The actors in a terrorist system determine the organization's capabilities and reach. States, in particular, sponsor terrorist organizations due to a shared sympathy with the ideological orientation and political goals of terrorists, as well as, to further their own state goals and beliefs. Some states find terrorism a cheap and deadly weapon capable of making America and its allies suffer. Other states use it in an attempt to force changes in policy and to weaken U.S. resolve on other issues. Regardless of the reason, supportive states provide terrorists and terrorist organizations the safe operating environment and lifeblood of support the organization needs to solidify and grow. Removing this actor from the terrorist system will impede the efforts of terrorist organizations.

In the past, the United States relied on diplomatic and economic efforts to force supportive states to cease their sponsorship: military force played a limited role in the U.S. counterterrorism strategy. As this thesis previously stated, the U.S. military was used only three times during the 1980s and 1990s to conduct offensive operations. These operations include: 1) an attack against Libya in 1986 for the La Belle disco bombing in West Berlin; 2) the retaliatory strike against Iraq in 1993 for its assassination attempt on former President George H.W. Bush; 3) and the strikes against Sudan and Afghanistan in 1998 following the U.S. Embassy bombings in Nairobi, Kenya and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. In each instance, the military force used was limited in both breadth and scope. The operations relied on limited strikes by aircraft and cruise missiles.

As the evidence in this thesis illustrates, these military strikes had minimal effect in coercing states to cease their sponsorship of terrorist organizations. Some of the evidence suggests, as in the Libyan case, that although state-sponsored terrorist incidents actually declined following the military strikes, the lethality of post-strike terrorist attacks increased as a result of the attacks becoming more sophisticated and focused. Furthermore, the attacks on September 11, 2001, the most deadly terrorist attacks seen to date, occurred even though the United States launched military strikes at Taliban and al Qaeda targets in Afghanistan following the U.S. Embassy bombings in 1998. A reason for this can be attributed to the fact that prior to 9-11, the United States did not possess a

credible military threat: a threat required, as Alexander George states, which is necessary for coercive diplomacy to be effective (George 1, 1994, p. 2). The United States was unwilling to escalate to higher levels of military action to demonstrate resolve in its effort to end state-sponsored terrorism. As a result, the United States relied on years of diplomatic and economic sanctions, unsupported by a credible military threat, in the hope that these sanctions could attain the desired result of forcing states to cease their terrorist support.

The U.S.S. COLE bombing in Yemen in 2000 forced U.S. policymakers to recognize the military instrument of national power during that time period was ineffective at coercing states to cease their support of terrorists. For the military to play a significant role in the U.S. counterterrorism strategy, force had to be employed in a manner which forced states to realize the costs of compliance with U.S. demands were lower than the cost of resistance. This would entail employing military force in a manner significantly different than the limited air and cruise missile strikes the U.S. relied upon in the past. As the Bush administration noted, ending al Qaeda's ability to use Afghanistan as a "sanctuary for operations" required using large-scale military force; a concept neither Congress nor the American public was willing to accept pre 9-11.

The events of September 11, 2001 changed the perspective of Congress and the American public. The results of the terrorist attacks in New York, Washington D.C., and Pennsylvania forced America to recognize that diplomatic, economic, and legal efforts alone could not end state-sponsored terrorism. Furthermore, for military force to be effective, its reach needed to be extended. Forcing the Taliban to cease their support of Usama bin Laden and his al Qaeda network required a significant escalation of military force beyond the air and cruise missile strikes employed in the past: large-scale military force was required.

The U.S. invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, followed by the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, produced the credible military threat the U.S. lacked in the past. Although there is significant debate as to whether the invasion of Iraq was justified, the fact remains that the U.S. demonstrated its willingness and resolve to protect its security and its interests. As a result, the United States not only removed two regimes it determined detrimental to

its security, but also established the credible military threat necessary for coercive diplomacy to be effective.

## **B. FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS AND AREAS OF STUDY**

### **1. Spectrum of Military Capabilities**

This thesis did not attempt to identify the types of military operations that will be most effective and least costly in accomplishing the U.S. national objective of ending state-sponsored terrorism. The purpose was to illustrate the role the military plays in today's U.S. counterterrorism strategy, as well as, defining the military's ineffectiveness of the past. The combination of overt and covert operations, as well as lethal and non-lethal military options, is an area requiring future study and consideration.

### **2. Instruments of National Power**

It is not the intent of this thesis to suggest that military force alone can end state-sponsored terrorism. On the contrary, as the game theory analysis suggests, in order for the U.S. to possess a credible military threat, it must willingly give something up as a side payment. It is critical, therefore, that the U.S. continues using all instruments of U.S. national power in the fight against state-sponsored terrorism. A combination of all aspects of national power gives the United States the leverage needed to project a coercive diplomatic strategy. The proper combination of national instruments of power is another area requiring further consideration and analysis.

### **3. Nature of the Observer**

State sponsors of terrorism are not irrational actors. Instead, these states make rational decisions to commit terrorist acts and provide support to terrorist organizations. Therefore, as Edward Smith (2002) states, “the real challenge at the center of . . . operations is how human decisionmakers perceive the actions in the physical domain as reported to them, and then how they make decisions” (p. 174). The psychological effects the U.S. seeks to create, so as to shape behavior, are the result of observations and perceptions as seen from the observer's viewpoint. The United States must look, therefore, at each action from the standpoint of what the observer is likely to see (p. 184).

Different observers with different levels and kinds of experience, mental models, national or organizational cultures, and understandings of the situation will make sense of the same action in different ways and reach different decisions as to how to respond to

stimulus (Smith, 2002, p. 186). Since the actions the United States takes in the war on terrorism are perceived by more than one human observer, it is important that the U.S. evaluate its intended audience. In the case of state sponsors of terrorism, it is important that regional and psychological experts continue to evaluate the intended audience to ensure the message the United States is sending, that it is willing to use military force to back-up its diplomatic demands, is the same message being received by the observer.

### **C. SUMMARY**

The history of previous political, economic, and military actions in similar situations are an essential part of shaping the deep understanding that goes into the sense that an observer makes of a given situation (Smith, 2002, p. 185). As Smith states, “the aggregate of our previous actions preconditions observers as to what they should expect to see” (p. 185).

Prior to 9-11, the United States’ military responses to state-sponsored terrorist attacks projected the image that the U.S. was unwilling to use large-scale military force. The limited strikes in Operation El Dorado Canyon and Infinite Reach preconditioned the leaders of supportive states to view the U.S. leadership as lacking commitment in its strategy to end state-sponsored terrorism. Therefore, as long as the state sponsor was willing to accept some minimal degree of physical damage, the state could “weather the storm” and continue supporting terrorists and terrorist organizations in an effort to further their states’ goals and beliefs. As the game theory analysis prior to 9-11 depicts, the end result of the U.S. strategy was that the United States would continue a policy of launching limited military strikes against state sponsors of terrorism, with the states continuing their commitment to terrorism: a failed strategy realized following the U.S.S. COLE attack, but not “changed” until after the deadly terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

The method in which the United States employed its military forces against state sponsors of terrorism dramatically changed following 9-11. No longer was the U.S. willing to limit its military actions against states sponsoring terrorism. As Afghanistan and Iraq illustrate, the U.S. became committed to a policy of denying states the ability to sponsor and support terrorists and terrorist organizations. Due to this willingness to use large scale military force to protect its national interests and security, the United States

established the credible military threat necessary for coercive diplomacy to be effective: a threat forcing other states to re-examine their cost-benefit analysis in relation to sponsoring terrorism.

Although the U.S. national strategy is fairly new, established after 9-11, the results are promising. Not only have the regimes of two state sponsors been removed from power, but other state sponsors have taken dramatic steps to disassociate themselves with terrorists and, in turn, are providing support to the United States. First, Libya is taking the final steps required to be removed from the U.S. State Department list of state-sponsored terrorism. Qadhafi identified Libya with the war on terrorism and the struggle against Islamic extremists, has taken responsibility for the bombing of Pan Am 103, and is dismantling its weapons of mass destruction program. As a result, the U.S. has granted numerous concessions to Libya, including reestablishing diplomatic relations; a key necessity for the threat of military force to be effective as shown in the game theory analysis of post 9-11.

Second, Sudan continues to strengthen its cooperation with U.S. counterterrorism efforts. Sudan's close relationship with various U.S. Government agencies provides the ability to investigate and apprehend extremists suspected of involvement in terrorist activities.

Finally, Syria repeatedly assures the United States that it will take every possible measure to protect U.S. citizens and facilities from terrorists in Syria. Syria has cooperated significantly with the United States and other foreign governments against al Qaeda, the Taliban, and other terrorist organizations and individuals.

Although a majority of the designated state sponsors of terrorism are cooperating with the United States in the war on terrorism, there are others which are not and, as a result, continue to pose a "grave" threat to U.S. national security. Iran, specifically, remains the most active state sponsor of terrorism. Furthermore, North Korea continues to pose a threat to U.S. security due to its willingness to continue developing its weapons of mass destruction program; along with the perception that North Korea may be willing to sell these weapons to terrorists. Finally, numerous countries not currently listed as "state sponsors of terrorism" by the U.S. State Department continue to provide support and safehavens for terrorists.

Currently, the U.S. military plays a significant role in the effort to end state-sponsored terrorism. The credible military threat the U.S. lacked prior to September 11, 2001, was established in the course of less than one year. Utilizing military action in similar situations is essential in shaping the deep understanding that leaders of supportive states make of the current war on terrorism. These leaders must fear that the same fate will fall upon them as did the Taliban in Afghanistan and Saddam Hussein and the Baath Party in Iraq unless they cease supporting terrorism. Fearing this fate, state leaders are more likely to concede to U.S. demands in return for a side payment beneficial to their country and their regime. Failing to continue this course of action and reverting to its pre 9-11 policy of using limited military strikes against state sponsors will destroy the United States' ability to use the threat of military force as a coercive instrument of U.S. national power: an instrument upon which its coercive diplomatic strategy is built.

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